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ABSTRACT

In this manual, the Friends of Black Children Project presents ideas for promoting and facilitating cooperation between social service agencies and black communities who are concerned about the disproportionate number of black children who remain homeless and unadopted. The guide is divided into four sections. Section I presents an overview of the Friends of Black Children Project (which is located at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). The goal of this project is said to be the development and testing of strategies involving collaborative work between four local county departments of social services and the black communities. Section II describes specific techniques that social service agencies can use when working with black families and the black community. Section III, on black community involvement, gives suggestions for local citizens who are organizing and working with county social services agencies. Finally, Section IV contains recommendations, addressed to State and local agencies, on organizing and facilitating the work of State-level advisory groups. Four appendices include: (1) a list of training resources and strategies: (2) a bibliography and resource guide; (3) sample questionnaires (sample of evaluation tools used by the Friends of Black Children Project); and (4) sample media and publicity materials. (KH)

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Creating New Linkages for the Adoption of Black Children

Friends of Black Children Project
A Guidebook

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August, 1984

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DEDICATION

This Guidebook is dedicated to all the children who wait for a permanent loving family. We know that it must be so awful for you not having the security of a permanent family -- to love and nurture you, to forgive your shortcomings, to understand your frustrations, and most of all to stick by you when the going gets rough. The Friends of Black Children Project was begun because

"WE CARE"!

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Mr. Bobby Connor
Ms. Sarah Delancey
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Mr. Franklin Freeman, Jr.
Mr. Glenn D. Fuqua
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Helen J. Berry
Project Director

FOREWARD

The Friends of Black Children Project was based on the idea that Black children can be served better if social service agencies and the Black community work together to find adoptive families. The Guidebook presents ideas and techniques for encouraging and facilitating a co-operative relationship between social services agencies and the Black community. These ideas have already been tested in four North Carolina counties during 1982-1983. Ten additional North Carolina counties are replicating this model of community-social services collaboration during 1983-1984. The experiences from the first year demonstration effort and part of the second year expansion project are incorporated in the Guidebook.

The Guidebook is intended to help social services agencies and the Black community engage in a joint venture to provide permanent families for Black children without homes. It is presented in four sections.

Section I, "What is the Friends of Black Children Project?" presents an overview of the project.

Section II, "The Departments of Social Services," gives specific techniques that social service agencies can use when working with Black families and the Black community.

Section III, "Black Community Involvement," will help local citizens organize and work with county social services agencies.

Section IV, "Advisory Committee," will help state and local social services agencies organize and facilitate the work of state-level advisory groups.

The Guidebook has four Appendices.

Appendix I, "Training Resources and Strategies," summarizes the training activities and resources which were used with agency staff, Council members, and Advisory Committee members who were involved with the Friends of Black Children project.

Appendix II, "Bibliography and Resource Guide," lists activities and resources which will help social workers, community leaders, and state and local social services agencies to implement the Friends of Black Children model.

Appendix III, "Sample Questionnaires," provides samples of the evaluation tools which were used by the Friends of Black Children project.

Appendix IV, "Sample Media and Publicity Materials," provides sample copies of media and publicity material used by Community Councils and social services agencies.

After reading the Guidebook, we hope that you will share our enthusiasm and commitment to serving Black children through a cooperative effort between the community and the social services agency. We also hope that you will be better prepared to develop and to implement specific plans for establishing this type of cooperation in your county or state.

We are available to assist you in your efforts to implement and replicate this project. If you need assistance, write or call:

Group Child Care Consultant Services
School of Social Work
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514
(919) 966-5466

PURPOSES AND USES OF THE GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook serves six major purposes:

1. To serve as a reference source for social service agencies and the Black community.

The primary purpose of the Guidebook is to disseminate the essential aspects of the model to assist in the replication of the project's community organization and collaborative approach to improving the adoption rate for Black children.

2. To serve as a training tool which can facilitate the adoption or adaptation of the Friends of Black Children model.

The replication of the model can be carried out by a state or local social service agency, a community group or jointly between a social services agency and a community group. Additionally, an outside technical assistance consultant could be used to serve as a liaison between the social services agency and the Black community. The role of the Friends of Black Children project staff during the demonstration year could be assumed either by the social services agency or by a community group in the implementaion of the model.

3. To provide an overview of the planning process for collaborative work between the social services agencies and the community.

After reading the Guidebook, representatives of an agency or of the community should know the basic steps for organizing and implementing the Friends of Black Children project. In addition each group should be prepared to use their creativity and flexibility to plan and implement dynamic cooperative ventures.

4. To provide a composite report of the experiences of people who were involved in the project during the pilot year.

The Guidebook presents the experiences of the community leaders, social services agency staff, consultants, project staff, and Advisory Committee members. The Guidebook summarizes the issues and presents case studies of each agency and community included in the pilot project. Examples of media and recruitment techniques which were used in the four counties are described. Samples of materials developed by the agency, by the community, and by the Friends of Black Children staff are also included to illustrate the variety and the creativity of collaborative approaches.

5. To highlight issues which are relevant to social services agencies and Black communities involved in meeting the needs of Black children without permanent adoptive families.

The Guidebook documents and illustrates those elements of good social work practice in adoption. The elements are evaluated with reference to their usefulness in working wth Black families or in facilitating agency relationships with the Black community. The processes of building a working relationship are a result of both theory about Black adoption and the practical experiences of communities which have implemented the Friends of Black Children model.

6. To provide a topical bibliography of general resources for social services agencies and the community.

Some of the resource materials were developed by staff of the Friends of Black Children project, others are available commercially or from state or local social services agencies.

SECTION I

WHAT IS THE FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN PROJECT?

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Origin of the Project

The Friends of Black Children project developed as a response to a problem of concern to people in North Carolina and the United States: a disproportionate number of Black children, free and clear for adoption, do not have permanent homes.

Many attempts have been made to solve this problem. For example, resources for social workers have been prepared to increase their skills in recruiting and working with Black families. Support groups of Black adoptive parents and community members have flourished in their attempts to advocate for Black children and to aid prospective adoptive and foster parents. In 1980, Congress enacted P.L. 96-272, The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, which served as a catalyst for states to implement permanency planning on behalf of all special needs children. Regional Adoption Resource Centers were established to facilitate work with states to spark significant increases in the number of special needs children who were adopted. Yet, a close analysis of the impact of these changes on the national, state, and local levels shows that the adoptive placement rates for Black children continue to lag significantly behind those of non-Black children.

National statistics indicate that Black children are less likely to achieve permanence through adoption than non-Black children. Throughout the United States, a disproportionate number of children in the "special needs" category are Black. For example, in Region IV of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services covering eight southeastern states, 78% of the children appearing in photo-listing books are Black. These are legally free children for whom no local family is available.

The fate of Black children in North Carolina is similar to the national trend. In North Carolina, three-fourths (75%) of children listed with the Photo Adoption Listing Service (PALS) are Black. PALS identifies children awaiting adoption whom agencies have been unable to place with adoptive families. Forty-six percent of the children legally free for adoption in North Carolina are Black. This percentage is approximately twice the total percentage of Black children in the state (28%). Clearly, agencies are experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining Black families to adopt Black children.

When we began working in October, 1982, 58% of the children waiting in North Carolina were Black. One year later, in October, 1983, 46% of the children needing permanent homes in North Carolina were Black.

Child welfare specialists publicly question whether permanency planning is working, particularly for minority children. Despite efforts

to promote collaborative efforts between agencies and adoptive parents,* meaningful cooperation is still rare. Most of these efforts have been time-limited and have failed to become institutionalized to any significant extent. There remain far too many examples of policy requirements and practices with questionable relevance to the goal of finding families for Black children.

It was in this atmosphere of uncertainty for thousands of Black children in North Carolina that the Friends of Black Children project was conceived. In order to effect a lasting impact, the approach taken to correct this critical problem relies on the efforts of state and local social services agencies and the community on an on-going institutionalized basis.

The Friends of Black Children model incorporated systematic strategies to work simultaneously with the state and local agencies and the Black community to facilitate the adoption of Black children. Based on the belief that meaningful collaboration between the local community and the social services agency could be productive for waiting Black children, Friends of Black Children sought to develop effective ways to foster cooperation and respect between these two groups.

In the Spring of 1982, Group Child Care Consultant Services, a division of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was selected by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families to submit a full non-competitive proposal to demonstrate the concept of collaborative work between state agencies, local agencies, and the Black community. This federally sponsored demonstration project was one of six in the country under the adoption priority area. The "Friends of Black Children" Demonstration Project was funded for a period beginning October 1, 1982 until September 30, 1983. A subsequent grant from the State of North Carolina Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services, extended the project through September 30, 1984.

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* Projects which have worked to promote this type of collaboration include: Homes for Black Children; the National Urban League's Interagency Adoption Project in Chicago and Columbia, South Carolina; the Regional Resource Centers; and TEAM. (Refer to Appendix II, Bibliography and Resource Guide.)

What Makes Friends of Black Children Unique?

The Friends of Black Children model uses a community organization approach to build bridges of understanding and cooperation between local social service agencies and the Black community. The Friends of Black Children model involves the following elements.

1. Mobilization of Black Community Representatives.

   Local level Friends of Black Children Community Councils were organized and developed in the four pilot counties involved in the project. The Councils were composed of Black citizens from all socio-economic, professional and non-professional groups. Orientations and training were provided for Council members about adoption procedures, waiting Black children, strategies for recruitment in their local communities, and working effectively with the local social service agency. (Refer to Section III, Black Community Involvement.)

2. The Establishment and/or Activation of Specific Policies and Plans by Social Service Agencies.

   Local social service agencies in the four pilot counties were assisted in identifying and altering agency practices which discouraged Black adoptive families. For example, intake procedures were changed which enabled staff to respond more quickly to prospective families, application forms were improved and shortened, group preparation of families was put to greater use, and child specific recruitment was done through video-taping of children legally free for adoption. Training was provided to agency staff around appreciating cultural differences and working effectively with Black families. (Refer to Section II, The Departments of Social Services and Appendix I, Training Resources and Strategies.)

3. The Development and Demonstration of Appropriate Ways to Bring About a More Effective Involvement of the Black Community.

   Recruitment meetings were held in different townships and communities within each county and were attended by social services adoption and supervisory staff. The adoption staff provided information on adoption procedures in the local county. These meetings were arranged by the local Community

Councils. Meetings were held in local Black churches, masonic lodges, and community centers within the Black community. It was felt that the location and negative images of the traditional Department of Social Services often created an intangible barrier to prospective Black adoptive applicants. The community meetings sponsored by the Friends of Black Chilren Councils helped to bridge the gap between the agencies and prospective adoptive applicants by acting as the source of initial contact and encouragement.

These four pilot counties and the Black communities are continuing their efforts to find adoptive families for Black children in North Carolina. Two of the four local Friends of Black Children Community Councils are incorpoated as non-profit organizations; the incorporation of the other two Councils is in process. (Refer to Section III, Black Community Involvement.)

4. The Establishment of a State Level Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee guided the planning and implementation of the project's goals and objectives. The committee held quarterly meetings of one to two days in length and communicated by mail and by telephone between meetings. The role of the Advisory Committee was:

a. to review needs assessment data from project counties;

b. to provide guidance in the development of strategies based on needs assessments;

c. to assist in the identification of strategies for accessing additional resources and for engaging local and or state organizations in meeting the identified needs;

d. to provide guidance in planning for a workshop to include the four project sites;

e. to provide leadership in devising and implementing strategies for self sustaining funding beyond the project year;

f. to review project activities; and

g. to provide over-all guidance and advice to the project staff.

5. Coordination of the Project with the North Carolina Division of Social Services.

The success of the demonstration project and subsequent replications in ten new counties (1983-84) was facilitated

by the active involvement of key state and regional office staff. These staff have direct responsibility for providing technical assistance to local county Departments of Social Services in the areas of permanency planning and adoption services. Valuable insights and information were secured through continuous and comprehensive briefing and consultaion from these state personnel based on their prior experiences with and knowledge of local county Departments of Social Services.

Specifically, personnel from the North Carolina Division of Social Services assisted the Friends of Black Children staff: (1) in selecting the four sites; (2) by introducing the project and project staff to the loal counties; (3) by providing training and technical assistance based on specific assessment of needs identified; (4) by assisting in the development of a plan for dissemination and replication of the project in other counties; (5) by actively participating on the Advisory Committee; and (6) by providing to the Advisory Committee statistical data on Black children in foster care and those waiting for adoption, on a state-wide basis.

In planning, organizing, and advocating for Black children by direct involvement with social service agencies, the focus on the fundamental change of traditional social service systems distinguishes this project from many other exemplary efforts on behalf of Black children.* This project is unique in that it aims to institutionalize community involvement and to establish a continuity of relationships between the agency and the Black community.

The Friends of Black Children project is based on a four-fold philosophy: (1) that the Black community needs to be knowledgeable, informed, and involved; (2) that agency practices and procedures need to be altered if barriers exist; (3) that the Black community and agency must work together to correct this critical problem; and (4) that each state and local agency must have a plan which includes the goals, resources, staff, materials, and accountability system to address this problem on an on-going basis.

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* For information on other national, state, and local Black adoption resources, refer to Appendix II, Bibliography and Resource Guide.

Project Goal

The overall goal of The Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project was to develop and test strategies which involved collaborative work between four local county Departments of Social Services and the Black communities. The major strategy used to accomplish this goal was to involve Black community groups in planning with local agency staff to answer the identified needs of adoptable Black children. Major emphasis was also focused on enhancing the local social services agency's capacity to serve the needs of Black families and children. More specifically, since most North Carolina agencies have predominantly white adoption staff, the project attempted to demonstrate the feasibility of establishing cooperative relationships that would serve the interests of waiting Black children.

Myths and misinformation contribute to the large number of Black children waiting for permanent homes. For instance, the myth that "Black families don't adopt" is based on the small number of Black families that have applied to public agencies to adopt in the past; this myth has been a barrier to social services agencies working with the Black community.

In the Friends of Black Children model, social services staff are helped to implement different and effective strategies to reach out to Black families, and to provide information about waiting Black children and about adoption procedures. Training and staff development opportunities were provided to county Departments of Social Services staff for the purpose of retaining Black families after they apply to adopt. For example, agency staff gained knowledge about Black culture, about working with the Black community, and about Black family strengths. Efforts were then made to institutionalize this knowledge into agency adoption policies and practices.

The Black community has a history of "taking care of its own" through informal adoptions. While Black children who never enter the child welfare system have found permanent homes through informal adoptions, this resource has not been a solution for those children who become a part of the child welfare system.

Therefore, community involvement is increasingly important to the provision of social services. Federal and state budget cuts have greatly reduced personnel and financial resources. Current realities predict that social service agencies must develop new and effective means of delivering services with reduced human and financial resources. The Friends of Black Children project staff assisted individuals and organizations in efforts to recognize and to address the needs of Black children in their own communities. As these citizens became involved, they inevitably became extensions of social service agency staffs in public education efforts.

The Friends of Black Children Project was based on the belief that neither the agencies nor the community working in isolation could effectively address the needs of waiting Black children. The position was taken that by working together, agencies and the community could make progress toward the recruitment, preparation, and retention of Black families willing to adopt Black children.

There were several issues which Friends of Black Children wanted agency-community teams to address. Some of these issues include the need for:

- homes for Black children who are older, handicapped, and/or members of sibling groups;

- new and effective ways to recruit and locate Black families who do not traditionally apply to public agencies to adopt;

- greater flexibility of criteria for the acceptability of adoptive families; and

- greater involvement of adoptive families and adoptive groups in recruitment and postplacement support of new families.

The function of the Friends of Black Children Project staff was to facilitate collaborative efforts to address these issues through technical assistance, training, and consultation to both social services agencies and Black communities.

Project Objectives

As a one-year demonstration project, our effort centered on five objectives:

1. To develop and enhance the leadership of "Friends of Black Children Community Councils" in advocating for the adoption of Black children in their localities;

2. To facilitate the involvement of local social services agency staff through training and technical assistance;

3. To provide targeted technical assistance to facilitate collaborative work between the county social services agencies and the Black community;

4. To establish and facilitate the work of a state-wide Project Advisory Committee;

5. To coordinate project development and implementation with the North Carolina Division of Social Services.

Each of these five objectives is described on the following pages.

Objective I: To develop and enhance the leadership of "Friends of Black Children Community Councils" in advocating for the adoption of Black children in their localities.

By identifying individuals to serve on Community Councils, the project increased Black participation in decisions made about Black children. The development of local leadership was essential for the attainment of the project goal.

Citizen participants were drawn from civic groups, professional associations, non-professional groups, and church congregations. Local input and self-selection necessarily played an important role in composing the Councils; "ownership" of the Councils by the local community enhanced their sense of responsibility for permanency outcomes for local Black children.

The work of the Community Councils is detailed in Section III, "Black Community Involvement."

Objective II: To facilitate the involvement of local social services agency staff through training and technical assistance.

The project facilitated the active involvement of social service agency staff with the Councils through the provision of training and

technical assistance. Since all of the pilot counties had predominately white staff, their participation was important. White staff participation was both direct, such as attending meetings, and indirect, such as providing support for activities planned by the Councils. In this way, staff effectiveness and comfort-level was increased when working with Black families. By encouraging agency staff to work with Black people outside of the agency, the project actively sought to foster a sense of trust and improved communication between the local county Department of Social Services and the Black community. The intent was to counter any child placement difficulties based on agency staffs' acceptance of myths and misperceptions about the Black family and its culture.

The role of the Departments of Social Services in the Friends of Black Children Model is detailed in Section II, "The Departments of Social Services."

Objective III: To provide targeted technical assistance to facilitate collaborative work between the county social services agencies and the Black community.

A cooperative "project agreement" was established with each of the four county Departments of Social Services that participated in this demonstration project. This agreement included: clarification of roles of the Project participants, including the agency, the Black community, and Friends of Black Children staff; designation of county personnel to be involved with the project; designation of a liaison person to the Community Council; and determination of the initial schedule for site visits.

Following a needs assessment in each project site, specific issues relevant to the needs in each local community were addressed. Specific information about Black children awaiting adoptive placement was also identified through the state foster care tracking system. This information was used in the evaluation of project outcomes in each site and to determine the resources needed in that particular community.

Resource materials were made available to each Council and agency for consideration in developing their objectives and in implementing their plan of action. These materials were utilized in orienting local staff and community representatives to possible approaches and practices which could increase adoptive placement for the identified children. While the project staff did not control placement outcomes, the focus of consultation and training was directed toward the development of action plans which bring children and adoptive families together.

Objective IV: To establish and facilitate the work of a state-wide Project Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee guided the planning and implementation of the project's goals and objectives. The role of the Advisory Committee was:

1. to give thoughtful, collective advice about improving the adoptions process in North Carolina;

2. to devise additional strategies for implementation of the project in the four pilot counties;

3. to review drafts of the Guidebook; and

4. to devise strategies for the support, continuation, and replication of the project in other North Carolina counties.

Most exemplary among the accomplishments of the Advisory Committee during the project year were:

1. facilitating the development of a 30-minute television program on Black adoption which was aired on WTVD in Durham, N.C. (A tape of this program has been made available to project staff and has been used in public information and recruitment meetings.);

2. developing a 30-second public service announcement for television recruitment of families;

3. identifying and securing funding for the second year expansion of the project; and

4. recommending changes in policies and practices for the state adoptions manual.

Objective V: To coordinate Project development and implementation with the North Carolina Division of Social Sevices.

The success of the demonstration project and subsequent replications was facilitated by the active involvement of key state and regional office staff; these staff people have direct responsibility for providing technical assistance to local county Departments of Social Services in the areas of permanency planning and adoption services. Valuable insights and information were secured through continuous and comprehensive briefings and consultation from these state personnel based on their prior experiences with and knowledge of local county Departments of Social Services.

Specifically, personnel from the North Carolina Division of Social Services helped Friends of Black Children in six ways: 1) selecting the four sites; 2) introducing the project and project staff to local counties; 3) providing training and technical assistance based on specific assessment of needs identified for each county; 4) assisting in the development of a plan for dissemination and replication of the project in other counties; (5) actively participating on the Advisory Committee; and (6) providing state-wide data on Black children in the foster care system and those waiting for adoption.

Staffing

The project staff consisted of two full-time professional staff persons: Helen J. Berry, Project Director, and Lottie Sneed, Program Specialist. Assistance to the project was also provided by Katey Assem, who worked as a Program Assistant as part of his requirements as a field placement student in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Karen D. Holloway was the Project Secretary.

In addition, two resource persons provided consultation in implementation, and evaluation. These resource persons were:

Dr. Carl Henley, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, served as the evaluation consultant.

Dr. Valora Washington, Associate Professor of Human Development and Psychological Services, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, served as the general consultant for the Guidebook.

The Demonstration Project Sites

The North Carolina Social Services system is a state-supervised, county-administered structure. County agencies maintain considerable local autonomy, resulting in uneven implementation of state policies and wide variations in practice. Technical assistance and training provided through the State office, because of staff and budgetary limitations, are usually offered to groups of county agencies (a region) rather than to individual counties.

Consequently, the Friends of Black Children Project was designed to offer concrete resources to specific agencies, with local ownership as an important motivational factor. Given our focus on community involvement, we recognized that the individual character of each county would be an essential variable in implementation.

In collaboration with state and regional office staff, one site was selected in each of the four regions of the state. The following selection criteria were used: 1) expression of interest by the county agency director; 2) identification, through the State of North Carolina Child Placement Information Tracking System, of a target population of Black children awaiting placement and/or an identified Black population as potential resource families; 3) the availability of local Black organizations (parent groups, congregations, professional associations, advocacy groups, sororities, civic groups, etc.); and 4) diversity of representation of counties in North Carolina (urban and rural sites, and counties with widely varying geographical/industrial/social/economic characteristics).

County Profiles

To respect the confidentiality of the four participating counties, this Guidebook refers to them as Counties A, B, C, and D. The implementation strategies employed in each county are presented within the discussion of both "The Departments of Social Services" (Section II) and "Black Community Involvement" (Section III). General demographic descriptions of each county are provided below.

County A

County A is located in the south-central part of the state and is mostly rural. The total population is 85,895; 12,201, or 14% of the total population, is Black.

The major sources of employment are the 85 textile plants based in the county. The bulk of persons employed work in unskilled labor jobs. The second major source of income is farming. The overall per capita income average in 1981 was $8,787. Of 1,766 families listed as living in poverty by the U.S. Census in 1980, 594 or 34% were Black families.

The county seat is located approximately 25 miles from a major city in an adjacent county. Due to the close proximity of the social services agency to this major city, community resources and contacts were used from both localities. There are 3 newspapers available, of which one is a Black newspaper, 5 radio stations, and 2 television stations. There are 33 Black churches in the county and one predominantly Black 4-year college.

Prior to participation in the Project the county Department of Social Services had not engaged in any continuous outreach efforts in the Black community. There was a crucial need for foster homes for Black children of all ages. The agency's past record for Black families completing the adoption process was 2 families in 5 years.

County B

This county is located in the north-eastern part of North Carolina. It is a predominately rural county with a population of 55,286; 26,053 or 47% of the total population is Black.

The major sources of income are manufacturing, textiles, and farming. The overall per capita income average is $6,422. Of the 3,558

families listed by the 1980 U.S. Census as living in poverty, 2,617 or 74% were Black families.

There are 5 newspapers, 2 radio stations, and 3 television stations. There are approximately 40 Black churches in the county.

The agency's adoption history included the use of a waiting list for both Black and white applicants.

County C

Located in the north-central part of the state, this predominately rural county has a total population of 83,426; 20.6% of the population is Black. The the county seat has a population of 18,236; 33.9% of this population is Black.

The major sources of employment are manufacturing, government services, private businesses, and farming. As of 1981, the overall per capita income was $8,212. Of a total of 2,376 poor families living in the county in 1980, 801, or 34%, were Black families.

The county seat is located approximately 27 miles from another major city in an adjacent county. Again, due to the close proximity, community resources and contacts were used from both cities. Together these two cities had 5 newspapers available, of which one was a Black newspaper, 2 radio stations, and 3 television stations. There are approximately 25 Black churches in the county.

Previous records for placement of Black children indicated that most of the Black children placed were from the ages of birth to 5 years. There had been no school-age children placed with families from the county.

County D

County D is located in central North Carolina, and contains several cities including the county seat. The total population of the county is 316,788, including 65,573, or 21.8%, Black residents. Rural areas surround a large urban/suburban city.

Government service, retail trade, and manufacturing are the major sources of non-farm employment. This county has the highest per capita income, $10,623, and the lowest unemployment rate in the state.

Potential resources for increasing public awareness about adoption are abundant. There are 7 newspapers, of which one is a Black newspaper. 2 of the county's radio stations are Black-owned. There are

3 major television stations. There are approximately 46 Black churches in the county.

An adoption support group was active in the county when the project began, and there were several other groups in close proximity to the county. Adoptive parents were being used to prepare prospective adoptive applicants. The trend for Black family response indicated that most inquiries for adoption came from blue-and white-collar residents of the urban area in the county.

Project Effectiveness

A formal evaluation process was built into each local community's schedule of activities with planned major evaluation activity at the end of the project year. The need for formal evaluation was introduced during the orientation period in order to help participants develop measurable action plans. Each Community Council was prepared to participate in a formal review session which included specific measurements of both quantitative and qualitative outcomes of their local action plan.

The evaluation looked at the Friends of Black Children's efforts to facilitate cooperation between County Departments of Social Services and Black communities. It was decided that prior to evaluating whether increased cooperation would in fact result in increased placements in permanent families for homeless Black children, it was necessary to determine whether the project had achieved the goal of increased cooperation. If the improvements in cooperation were found to have occured, the assumption that changes in actual placements would occur could be tested.

The evaluation was conducted in six parts:

(a) ongoing evaluation of Project progress with agency staff and Council members in each of the four sites; (See the sections of the Guidebook which focus on the agency (Section II) and the Community Councils (Section III));

(b) assessment of changes in agency policies and procedures about adoption as a result of their participation in the project. (Section II);

(c) pre- and post-tests of Community Council members;

(d) a post-project survey of both Community Council members and agency staff;

(e) assessment of changes in the availability of Black families; and

(f) assessment of changes in the placement of Black children.

All surveys provided for an anonoymous response. The pre- and post-tests of Community Council members, the post-project survey of Community Council members and agency staff, and the assessment of changes in the availability of Black families are described on the following pages. (Appendix III contains samples of the two surveys.)

Pre- and Post-Test Survey

As part of the evaluation plan for this project, a pre-test/post-test questionnaire was developed. This questionnaire measured knowledge in several areas including the foster care system, special needs adoptions, the needs of Black children, the needs of the local Department of Social Services, local Black community resources, and adoption eligibility requirements.

Fifty-three people answered the questionnaire at the beginning of the project, and twenty-five people answered the questionnaire at the end of the project. There were several unforeseen reasons for this discrepancy including: (a) nonattendance of Council members at the post-test meetings; (b) influx of new Council members in the middle or end of the project who did not take the pre-test; and (c) inconsistent identifying data in some instances. Nine people answered the questionnaire both at the beginning and at the end of the project. Therefore, the following analysis pertains to those nine people only.

The mean percent of questions answered correctly at the beginning of the project was 42%, and the mean percent of questions answered correctly at the end of the project was 54%. Therefore, on the average, the knowledge level of project participants increased by 12%. (This difference is statistically significant.)

Post-Project Survey

The post-project survey measured the attitudes of Friends of Black Children Council members toward the local Department of Social Services and the attitudes of local Department of Social Services staff toward Friends of Black Children Council members. This questionnaire was developed and mailed at the end of the project year to Department of Social Services staff and to people who had been regular members of the Friends of Black Children Council.

A total of thirty-two questionnaires were mailed to Friends of Black Children Council members; twenty-one questionnaires were answered and returned for a response rate of 66%. A total of sixteen questionnaires were mailed to, and twelve were returned from, Department of Social Services staff members for a response rate of 75%. The overall response rate was 69%.

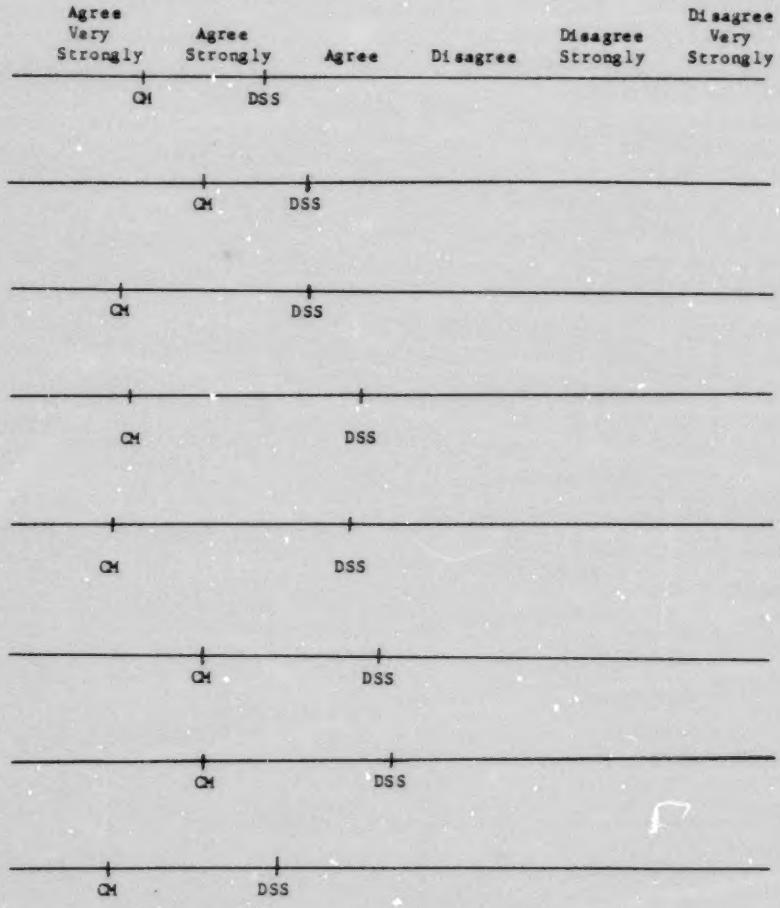
The table presented on the following page charts the survey results. As can be seen from the Table, the median response to each question was positive for both Council members and agency staff; no median response was on the "disagree" side of the scale. Yet, the median response of

Council members was more positive on each question than was the median response of agency staff members. This finding indicates that, overall, Friends of Black Children Council members viewed the project more positively than did the agency staff members. The largest difference between the median response of the two groups indicated that Council members were more optimistic about the project's effect on the actual adoption of Black children.

The most encouraging finding was that the most positive median response given by both Council members and agency staff members occurred on the same question: "I feel that the Council and the DSS staff should continue to work together in the future." This highly positive response by both groups would seem to indicate that the Friends of Black Children project has been very successful in bringing these two groups closer together. Furthermore, both groups seem to be indicating that they prefer a collaborative approach between the Community Councils and the agency.

RESULTS OF POST-PROJECT SURVEY

Median Response by Department of Social Services Staff (DSS) and Friends of Black Children Council Members (CM)


Agree Very Strongly
Agree Strongly
Agree
Disagree
Disagree Strongly
Disagree Very Strongly
1. I feel that the Council can be of much assistance to the DSS staff in recruiting families to adopt Black children.
CM
DSS
2. I feel that most DSS staff members want the help of the Council in recruiting families to adopt Black children.
CM
DSS
3. I feel that most Council members want to help the DSS staff by recruiting families to adopt Black children.
CM
DSS
4. I feel that the Council and the DSS staff are better able to work together now than they were at the beginning of this project.
CM
DSS
5. I feel that this project has greatly increased the awareness of the Black community that there are Black children who are waiting to be adopted.
CM
DSS
6. I feel that this project has greatly increased the knowledge of the DSS staff about local, Black-community resources.
CM
DSS
7. I feel that this project greatly increased the chances that Black children will be adopted.
CM
DSS
8. I feel that the Council and the DSS staff should continue to work together in the future.
CM
DSS

Changes in the Availability of Black Families

Each Community Council sponsored four recruitment meetings from February through August, 1983. There was a total attendance of aproximately 250 persons at these meetings in the four counties.

The efforts of the local agencies and Community Councils in the four pilot sites resulted in a 400% increase in the number of Black families available to adopt Black children. When the project began there were only four Black families known to be approved and waiting to adopt in the four pilot counties. Twenty Black families were known to be approved and waiting to adopt by the end of the project year. In addition, ten families were in the preparation process, and fourteen prospective families were referred to their local Department of Social Services in another county and/or to a private child placing agency.

Of the thirteen Black families who inquired about foster care, four families had completed the licensing process by the end of the project year.

Changes in the Placement of Black Children

There were twenty-eight Black children placed with adoptive families in these four pilot counties. A number of these children were members of sibling groups and older children (three brothers ages 9, 12, 15; a brother and sister, ages 13 and 15; and a single male, age 15). Agencies have had some success in placing children under the age of four; however, during the first project year, they were more successful in placing older Black children with families than they had been in the past.

Tasks for Agencies and Communities

To implement the Friends of Black Children concept, both the Community Council and the local Department of Social Services needed to first assess their strengths and weaknesses. A major role of the project was to assist the social services agencies and the communities in their efforts to specify, address, and evaluate their progress on tasks related to the successful placement of Black children.

The strategies used to implement the project-defined tasks varied in each local community. However, the following is a general list of tasks which were performed by both the Department of Social Services and the local Community Council.

A. The Department of Social Services

1. Agency Preparation

    a. Identifying the Key People Involved
    b. Defining Roles and Expectations
        1. Agency
        2. Friends of Black Children Staff
        3. Community
    c. Developing Project Agreement

2. Agency Policies and Procedures

    a. Identifying and Addressing Some Common Concerns
    b. Preparing for the Community Involvement
    c. Developing Recruitment Materials, Strategies, and Techniques
    d. Handling Adoption Inquiries
    e. Keeping Track of Children and Families

3. Assessing Project Effectiveness with Agencies

    a. Demographic Characteristics
    b. Implementation Similarities and Differences

4. Checklist of Effective Social Work Practice

B. Black Community Involvement

1. Identifying Key People

2. Organizing Community Councils

3. Roles of the Community Council

4. Working with The Agency

   a. Awareness of Specific Waiting Children
   b. Awareness of Professional Jargon
   c. Awareness of Adoption Eligibility
   d. Awareness of Legal Steps in Adoption
   e. Awareness of Foster Parent Eligibility

5. Community Council Recruitment Activities

6. Assessing Project Effectiveness with Community Council

   a. Characteristics and Profiles of Council Members
   b. Stability of Membership
   c. Relationship with the Agency
   d. Development of Council
   e. Recruitment Materials and Strategies
   f. Schedule of Community Council Activities

7. Moving Toward Independence

C. Staff and Community Council Training

1. Educating Agency Staff

   a. History and Familiarity with Black Culture
   b. Workshop on Family, Traditions, and Lifestyles
   c. Workshop on Black Language

2. Compiling Resources for Agency and Community

   a. How to Keep Black Families after They Apply
   b. How to Develop a Community Resource Sheet

3. Educating Community Council Members

   a. Fundraising Can Be Fun
   b. How to Plan an Adoption Seminar
   c. How Children Come into Foster Care

The Guidebook will follow this outline of the tasks which agencies and communities need to accomplish. Tasks related to the Department of Social Services are addressed in Section II of the Guidebook. Tasks related to Black Community involvement are addressed in Section III. Agency staff and community volunteer training are addressed in Appendix I. A bibliography and resource guide is presented in Appendix II. Sample questionnaires are contained in Appendix III. Sample media and publicity materials are provided in Appendix IV.

SECTION II

THE DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Overview

Local social services agencies play a critical role in the adoption process. Agencies hold the legal authority to place children and thus have a legal obligation to find homes for them.

To help in fulfilling this legal mandate, the Friends of Black Children Project invited the social services agencies to participate in a community organization and development approach to recruiting Black families. To do this effectively, agencies shared information, time, and resources with concerned citizens. This represented a substantial change in approach for some of the agencies. However, this approach offered many advantages to children.

This section of the Guidebook focuses on the role of the social services agencies in implementing the Friends of Black Children model. Specifically, it describes: key people who participated in the project; roles and expectations; the project agreement; how to work with the community; agency policy; recruitment; how to keep track of waiting children and potential families; and profiles of the four participating agencies. A "Checklist of Effective Social Work Practices" which agencies can use to review their policies and procedures is provided.

Agency Preparation

Working with the agency director or the director's designee, the first step was to clarify who needed to be informed of and involved in the project and who would be responsible for informing and involving them. Roles and expectations were specified. The outcome was an agreement between the agency and the Friends of Black Children staff. Specifically, the agreement outlined the role of the agency, the role of the Friends of Black Children staff, and the role of the Black community when working with the Friends of Black Children model.

Identifying Key People Involved

Internal education of all staff in the local agency was the next task which needed to be accomplished. Since agency board members and administrators, preoccupied with budget and personnel concerns, are often unaware of the urgent need to find homes for waiting Black children it was particularly important that they be included in the internal education process. Presentations to the board and agency personnel concerning the need for a special effort to recruit families for Black children included the following information:

- Children available for adoption (numbers, race, sex, age)
- Current living arrangement of these children
- Reason for foster care placement (including how long they have been legally free)
- Recruitment efforts (including examples of successes and failures)
- Reasons for participating in Friends of Black Children

Three to four agency staff were involved in the project:

1. The Agency Director. The director had the authority to commit the agency resources and personnel to the project. In addition to their agency involvement, agency directors also participated on the Advisory Committee and had thorough opportunities to examine the adoption process in both his/her county and in the state.

2. The Adoption Unit Supervisor. The supervisor had daily responsibility for the adoption process in a local county. S/he had

access to current data and was aware of local trends in adoption, including the types of families being recruited, recruitment needs, and community involvement. S/he was also aware of the existence of parent support groups and other services available to prospective adoptive parents.

3. The Adoption Social Worker. This was the individual who had the most frequent and on-going responsibility for intake, referrals, preparation of families, and placement. Consequently, the adoption worker often had primary responsibility for working with community groups and for fulfilling other duties as required by the Friends of Black Children proposal. It was essential that this individual support the goals of the project.

4. If necessary, staff was added for racial balance. If both the adoption supervisor and social worker were of the same race, it was appropriate to include a staff member of a different race in the project.

For example, if the supervisor and worker in adoption were both white, a Black worker from another area, such as foster care, was asked to work with the project. Since the goal of Friends of Black Children was to facilitate communication between the agency and the Black community, credibility and trust were enhanced by including, wherever possible, involvement by someone from the Black community. Additionally, Black staff provided access to and information about local Black citizens to serve on the Community Councils.

Using these general guidelines, deciding which staff persons should participate in the project was relatively easy in most social services agencies. These guidelines were discussed between the project director and the agency director. The agency director made all final decisions about who should participate.

Defining Roles and Expectations

Important roles and expectations which required clarification included: the role of the agency; the role of the Friends of Black Children Project staff; and the Black community's role. Roles and expectations were specified in a "Project Agreement."

The Role of The Agency

There were nine major roles and expectations of the agency staff.

1. In conjunction with Friends of Black Children staff, implement the tasks listed in Section I.

2. Assist project staff in identifying local community leaders.

3. Identify and provide information on waiting Black children and/or those for whom adoption is the plan on an on-going basis throughout the year.

4. Document adoption inquiries through the use of the inquiry tracking form and provide a quarterly report regarding the same.

5. Participate in adoption training and request additional training and technical assistance as needed.

6. Identify two persons to serve as agency liaisons to the Friends of Black Children Council.

7. Attend all Community Council meetings.

8. Provide information regarding agency requirements for foster care and adoption at the Friends of Black Children community meetings.

9. Provide pamphlets and brochures to the Community Councils regarding agency procedures and requirements for adoption and foster care.

In addition to these nine roles, there were two other issues which required clarification -- the time commitment of agency staff and the involvement of Black staff. Each of these issues is described in detail on the following pages.

Agency Time Commitment. Finding families for Black children required a time commitment from the agency and its staff. Finding families for Black children required that agencies prioritize adoption staff time, especially if the tendency had been to respond to families who requested services rather than to recruit families for waiting children. Generally, agencies with a "response," rather than a "recruit," philosophy tended to get adoption inquiries more frequently from families wanting to adopt white, healthy infants. Since the adverse publicity was sometimes associated with taking a stance of serving children rather than families, agencies had often used staff time serving families who were willing to wait three or more years for a particular type of child.

In addition to recruiting and preparing Black families, staff also participated in training and in the organization of the Community Council. Specifically agency staff involved with the project:

* attended an orientation/training session;

* identified and sent letters to community leaders inviting them to an organizational meeting of the Council;

* assisted project staff in initial preparation of the Council by informing them of their county's adoption process, the types of children available, and the agency needs;

* supported the recruitment efforts sponsored by the Council; and

* kept records which tracked the status of children and of prospective parents.

The Friends of Black Children staff assisted project agencies and the Councils with any logistical details and technical questions. However, an important goal of the project was to assure that the cooperative relationship between the agency and the community would become self-sustaining in the years following the project.

Involvement of Black Staff. In discussing the agency's participation in the Friends of Black Children Project, three questions often emerged:

Why have a special project for Black children?

Why is it important to include a Black social worker in the project, even if there is not Black worker in adoption?

Aren't the recruitment techniques you suggest good for all children, not just for Black children?

In the beginning of this Guidebook, we described the problem of Black children in North Carolina without homes. Black children are disproportionately represented on "waiting lists" and they are more likely to wait longer for a home. Simply stated, there is a need for a project which focuses on Black children because Black children have special needs and generally have been considered "hard to place."

In addition, an unfortunate part of our history has created suspicion between the "traditional" agency and the Black community. This has made it more difficult for agencies to communicate with the Black community about the needs and availability of children. Cultural differences coupled with misconceptions about the adoption process and expectations after placement have made it all the more difficult for Black children to get permanent homes.

These facts underline the importance of including Black social workers in the project. Our experience supports Dawn Day's* findings about the contributions that Black workers at an agency can make.

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* Reprinted by permission of the publisher, from The Adoption of Black Children: Counteracting Institutional Discrimination. by Dawn Day. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1979.

1. They serve as interpreters of Black culture to white social workers.

2. They have particularly good ideas about how to reach out effectively to recruit families from the Black community.

3. They have insight into how agency procedures could be improved so that qualified Black applicants would not be discouraged.

4. The very presence of Black social workers at the agency can help convince Black applicants that the agency is concerned about providing service to them.

The effectiveness of Black workers has been demonstrated by research. One study found that only one-third of the agencies with no Black social workers were highly involved with Black adopters, but two-thirds of the agencies which hired Black social workers were highly involved.

Of course, many of the techniques suggested throughout this Guidebook are considered just plain good social work practice whether the worker or the family is Black or white. However, the project emphasized strategies that tend to be particularly congruent with Black cultural values.

The Role of The Friends of Black Children Staff

The social services agencies received a variety of support services from the project staff. These services included:

1. assistance in identifying organizations and individuals who formed the Community Council;

2. support in organizing and training members of the Community Councils;

3. the provision of training seminars;

4. frequent on-site visits to assist in identifying and solving the needs of children waiting for adoption;

5. suggestions and support with recruitment and preparation of prospective families for placement of children;

6. consultation to agencies reexamining and revising their adoption practices and policies and procedures; and

7. assistance in developing recruitment materials, such as posters or videotapes.

The Role Staff in Relationship to the Community

Many of the agency's first meetings with the community were filled with questions: Why has this situation developed? What can we do about it? Some of these questions were interpreted as a challenge to the agency's efficiency and commitment to helping these children. Agency staff was called upon to respond to such questions as nondefensively as possible.

The role of the Friends of Black Children staff and the adoption professionals with the local agency was to explain to the Council membership the requirements and procedures for adoption in their county. Few, if any, of the Council members were professional social workers. Therefore, it was often necessary to explain the specifics of jargon terms such as "study" or "preparation" that are part of the everyday vocabulary of an adoption worker.

The involvement of agency and Friends of Black Children staff with the Black community did not end after the Community Councils were successfully begun. The Community Councils gave freely of their time, talent, and ideas to plan and execute recruitment campaigns. However, the Friends of Black Children Community Councils should not be viewed as the entire solution to the problem. Social services agencies must assume responsibility for continuing to engage the community.

Developing a Project Agreement

After many discussions, the agency director, the agency adoption supervisor, and the Friends of Black Children staff signed a cooperative agreement. A sample project agreement is presented on the following pages.

SAMPLE FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN PROJECT AGREEMENT

The purpose of this agreement is to define the goals of the Friends of Black Children Project and to define roles and expectations of the project staff, agency staff and of Central Office staff.

The overall purpose of the Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project is to facilitate collaborative work between the local county Department of Social Services and the Black community in order to eliminate barriers to the adoption of Black children and to increase the placement of those children who are waiting for families.

The goal of the project is to increase the capacity of the local community to meet identified needs through increased community understanding, involvement, and commitment to Black children who need adoptive families, and increase knowledge and skill of Department of Social Services staff members in working with Black families and children.

County Department of Social Services Staff
(list staff involved with the project)
Agency Liaison to project Staff: (staff name)
(Two staff members including a Black social worker.)
Friends of Black Children Community Council Liaisons: (staff name)

Friends of Black Children Project Staff
Helen Berry, Project Director
Lottie Sneed, Program Specialist
Katey Assem, Program Assistant

Central Office
Ms. Sue Glasby, Head, Children's Services Branch, Division of Social Services
Ms. Wanda Reives, Permanency Planning Consultant
Ms. Jane Malpass, Permanency Planning Consultant
Ms. Joan Silvery, Adoption Consultant
Ms. Catherine Grimes, Adoption Consultant

Roles and Expectations of Friends of Black Children Project Staff
The Friends of Black Children Project staff will:

1. Provide specialized consultation to facilitate the goals of the Project.
2. Consult with identified agency staff to identify children waiting to be adopted and those children where adoption is the plan.
3. Jointly identify community leaders with DSS staff.
4. Provide suggestions to expand grass roots groups not readily identified by agency staff, from direct contacts by Project staff within the community, when necessary.
5. Jointly participate with identified Department of Social Services staff in the organization of the Friends of Black Children Council. This includes assistance in selecting meeting sites, preparation of invitations to community leaders, provision of technical assistance as needed, and sharing pertinent information.

6. Attend meetings of Friends of Black Children Council and serve in an advisory capacity to the Council.
7. Provide technical assistance needed by the local DSS and the Council on an on-going basis.

Roles and Expectations of Agency Staff

Agency staff will:

1. Identify waiting Black children and those for whom adoption is the plan on an on-going basis throughout the year.
2. Request training and technical assistance as needed from central office staff.
3. Serve as an agency representative and liaison to the Friends of Black Children council.
4. Attend all Community Council meetings.
5. Implement implement the tasks, strategies and activities identified as tasks for agencies and communities in conjunction with Friends of Black Children staff. (See Section I.)

Roles and Expectations of Central Office Staff

Central Office staff will:

1. Serve in an advisory capacity to Friends of Black Children project staff and the Departments of Social Services in the implementation of the project.
2. Collaborate and/or provide training, technical assistance, and consultation as requested by project staff and Departments of Social Services.
3. Facilitate through the county departments of social services the development of ways to mobilize Black citizens to recognize the circumstances of Black children waiting for adoptive families.
4. Provide access to information and provide statistical data about Black children in foster care in North Carolina.
5. Designate Ms. Sue Glasby, Head, Children's Services Branch, as the representative to the Friends of Black Children's Advisory Committee.

The Friends of Black Children Project staff agrees to commit to at least one day per month for on-site visits to the project county. These contacts will not be limited to visits to the agency. Some of this time will be spent in the community. It is expected that at least 1 1/2 hours of this time will be spent in consultation with the identified agency liaisons.

This agreement is entered into on December___, 1982, between the parties specified below. Changes to this agreement can be made at any time with the approval of the undersigned parties.

_____
Director
Social Service Agency

_____
Helen J. Berry, Project Director
Friends of Black Children

_____
Sue Glasby, Head
Children's Services Branch
Division of Social Services

Agency Policies and Procedures

A continuing aspect of the Friends of Black Children Project was the examination of agency practices and procedures with particular concern for their impact on Black adoptive families.

Social services agencies participating in the project assessed their current procedures in order to eliminate barriers to the preparation and retention of Black families. From the point of initial contact with a family through placement, staff evaluated whether existing procedures responded to prospective parents in a positive way. Prospective parents responded more positively to agency procedures oriented toward "screening-in" families rather than toward screening them out.

The practice of screening-in families is based on the belief that most families who apply to adopt have inherent strengths, and that the desire to parent an adoptive child is in itself an important strength. Every effort should be made to help families assess what their strengths are and what a particular child might derive from their particular family. In contrast, screening families out is an approach which places families in the defensive position of explaining why they would be an appropriate family for a particular child. This approach focuses on weaknesses rather than strengths.

Identifying and Addressing Common Concerns

In all four project agencies there were some areas of common concern related to policies and procedures in the local agencies which placed barriers to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of Black adoptive applicants. These included flexibility of working hours, application forms, financial reports, legal documents, responsiveness and relevance, and engaging the efforts of volunteers.

Flexibility of Working Hours

The scheduling of office or home interviews during the business day, as opposed to willingness to make appointments during the evenings or on weekends, posed problems for those families who did not hold professional jobs. Recognizing that flexible working hours was a basic element in responding to some Black families, the local social services agencies used a system of compensatory time for staff.

Application Forms

The Friends of Black Children staff helped agencies to revise the forms that prospective parents were required to fill out. Unrevised applications reflected some of the following problems They:

(a) were too lengthy;

(b) included personal questions (such as marital history, age or educational level) which might have turned off prospective applicants, particularly when the information was requested prior to personal interviews;

(c) required applicants to give excessive job histories (for example, a request for potential adoptive parents to list all jobs held within the past ten years);

(d) included questions which had little bearing on the family's ability to adopt, such as home ownership or church affiliation;

(e) required that a physician verify infertility (This requirement may serve to screen-out Black families for whom this is not an issue, particularly for families interested in older children.);

(f) asked applicants questions concerning mental health such as requests to list all physicians and therapists consulted during the past ten years; and

(g) asked for lengthy family histories, including the addresses, birth dates, education, and occupation of parents, grandparents, sisters, and brothers. Applicants are likely to react negatively when required to give detailed information concerning matters of doubtful relevance to their ability to parent a particular child.

Overall, what is most important is the family's ability to meet the child's needs. Thus, application forms were kept simple. As far as possible, information was gathered orally to decrease the likelihood that a prospective applicant would draw a negative conclusion about their suitability to become an adoptive parent based on the questions asked.

Financial Reports

It was recommended that financial statements be limited to reflect monthly income and expenditures. It was felt that requests for information regarding stocks and bonds and savings might be interpreted as "a must" by prospective applicants, and thus serve as a "screeing-out" tool.

Legal Documents

Many families had difficulty locating birth certificates, marriage licenses, and other legal documents. Often these records had been lost

or misplaced. It was suggested that agency staff assist families in finding these documents.

Responsiveness and Relevance

Agencies were asked to make every attempt to return telephone calls or follow up with potential families within 48 hours, and to schedule appointments for interviews within ten working days. Agency staff were asked to be prepared to tell families why specific information was requested and the relevance of such information to the adoption process. The importance of maintaining a human touch was stressed. Speed in responding to initial inquiries and in processing applicants was viewed as a means of ensuring the retention of adoptive families.

Use of Volunteers*

Agencies were sometimes reluctant to use volunteers because they felt that volunteers would require a great deal of staff time. This was not a problem when social services agencies were clear about three points: (1) the tasks they expected volunteers to perform; (2) the tasks that could be done by volunteers alone; and (3) the tasks that should be done jointly with a social worker. For example, tasks which volunteers could undertake independently were distribution of agency publicity literature or setting up displays. Volunteers involved with media presentations needed to be accompanied by an agency staff person who was responsible and accountable so that the audience would be given a clear picture of agency policies.

Volunteers were extremely helpful in identifying groups to help with the recruitment of families for Black children. Contact with a broad base of community groups was especially important since a recruitment campaign that appealed to only one economic segment of the community would have excluded many other potential adoptive parents. Since racial identity transcends economics, it was crucial that the agency develop a broad community base that made a clear statement to the total Black community. Planning for Black children was seen as a task to which the entire Black community could respond.

When volunteers are used to express the need for homes, it was important that they be armed with facts about the children:

- Who are the children?
- How many children are available for adoption?
- Where are they?

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* Adapted from The Special Needs Adoption Self-Instructional Curriculum, Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1982.

- If there are physical or emotional problems, what are these problems and what can a family expect?

- What services are available to assist the family during and after placement?

Preparing for Community Involvement

Identification of Black community resources was among the initial tasks of the agency. In order to accomplish this task the following questions were addressed.

- What are the major Black communities and townships? (All towns with a significant Black population were identified in each project county.)

- Who are the leaders? (A list of community leaders was developed.)

- What are the resources? (Media/publicity resources were identified in each project county.)

With the assistance of the social services agency staff in each county, all major townships containing a significant Black population were identified to ensure that the total county would be targeted for the recruitment efforts. In discussions with agency staff, we learned that most applicants came from the largest city within the county or the town where the social services agency was located. In an effort to achieve area-wide coordination of activities, the Friends of Black Children Community Councils were structured to include the untapped resources in each county. Further details regarding the structure and functioning of each Friends of Black Children Community Council appear in Section III, "Black Community Involvement."

An initial list of prospective Community Council members was completed by agency staff for each project county. Special attention was given to see that a broad cross-section of people were invited to the first organizational meeting. This included Black community leaders, foster parents, and adoptive parents.

In most instances, the list of prospective Council members identified by the agency did not represent a broad cross-section of prospective Council members. Rather, those individuals who were identified initially represented the visible community leaders and professional Blacks. Part of the task was to work with other individuals, and through the Community Council membership, to identify two additional groups of volunteers: (1) local citizens who were willing to assist but who did not have high visibility; and (2) citizens with marginal and low incomes.

After the initial prospective membership list was compiled, a letter of invitation was sent to each person. The letters of invitation were followed by a telephone contact from agency staff to explain the role of

a Friends of Black Children Community Council. The following page presents a sample of the Friends of Black Children Community Council Prospective Membership List.

The first organizational meeting was held in a centrally located area in each county. The agenda for the initial meeting was planned jointly by project staff and the social services agency staff. Project staff were responsible for facilitating the meeting, arranging for guest speakers, and arranging film presentations. The social services staff provided photographs of waiting children and explained agency adoption procedures.

SAMPLE

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHLDREN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERSHIP LIST

The following list should include names of community leaders. This list can include any person with significant influence in their respective communities, i.e. club leaders, church leaders, professional and non-professional.

1. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

2. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

3. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

4. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

5. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

6. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

7. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

8. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

9. Name _____
   Address _____
   Telephone (day) _____
   (night) _____

10. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

11. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

12. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

13. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

14. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

15. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

16. Name _____
    Address _____
    Telephone (day) _____
    (night) _____

Developing Recruitment Materials, Strategies, and Techniques

During meetings with the Department of Social Services, prior to organization of the Community Council, agency commitment to recruitment efforts was discussed. Commitment to recruitment efforts included developing brochures or having pamphlets, brochures, and posters available for distribution.

Most project counties were using pamphlets, brochures and posters made available to them by the State Division of Social Services. While the posters and brochures provided general information about adoption or foster care, they did not provide specific local agency information. The project agencies developed materials which accurately explained the following:

- Current local agency focus on finding homes for special needs children;
- Statement of need for Black adoptive homes;
- What prospective applicants could expect from point of inquiry until the agency recommended placement;
- General requirements for foster care offering persons the opportunity to provide that service; and
- Person to contact at the agency.

Project agencies showed photographs of waiting children at planned recruitment efforts. One of the agencies decided to videotape their waiting children. By the end of the project year, three of the four agencies had videotapes of their waiting children. One of the project agencies filmed interviews with adoptive couples to be used to educate prospective applicants about the adoption process.

Handling Adoption Inquiries

Friends of Black Children staff met with agency staff to discuss agency response to recruitment. Generally, agency staff in all four counties gave positive feedback about the roles and activities of the Community Councils with regard to recruitment. Discussions regarding the agency response to recruitment efforts of the Councils raised several issues.

1. How does the agency respond to adoption inquiries? How are these inquiries recorded?

2. Are people placed on "hold" after inquiries? Why?

3. Are people being "screened out" prematurely? Why?

4. How does the agency respond to large numbers of families responding to recruitment?

Each of these four areas is described on the following pages. A handout, "Tips on Handling Intake Calls" (see next page), was provided to assist agencies in dealing with initial inquiries.

TIPS ON HANDLING INTAKE CALLS*

The techniques described below are helpful in soliciting information without asking pointed questions. Remember, the person calling may be a resource for one of our waiting children! Your role is to help them learn more about the process of adopting a child, to answer any specific questions they may have, to facilitate their following through with this initial interest.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO SHARE AND INTERPRET

- The need for homes for special needs children -- school age children, children with special mental, emotional, or physical needs, and sibling groups
- Options for attending orientation, group preparation, and training sessions
- State law requiring that applicants be at least 18 years of age

LEAD COMMENTS & QUESTIONS TO SOLICIT SHARING OF INFORMATION

"Tell me a little about your family." (Usually opens the door; may need to follow with "Do you have any children?" "What kind of work do you do?" etc.)

"Are you interested in a certain type of child?"

"Are you interested in a Black child or a white child?" (If race is uncertain, do not presume.)

"What would you like to know about the process?" (If this question triggers any specific anxieties, communicate flexibility/openness rather than judgment or rejection. When in doubt screen people in, not out.

"I'd like to send you some more information, and after you read it, if you have any other questions, please call me."

"Tell me what your children are like."

"Could you tell me what kind of children you've had personal experience with?"

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO RECORD

- Name, address & phone number (first names preferred)
- Nature of inquiry
- Action taken
- Worker's initials
- Source of referral (recruitment evaluation)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION, IF SHARED BY APPLICANT

- Age(s) of applicant(s)
- Type of employment, work schedule
- Type of child desired (generally, do not force decision, but use subject to describe types of children needing placement)
- Any facts shared voluntarily

* Adapted from John Wolff and Gerald Corner, How to Plan and Conduct an Effective Recruitment Campaign, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington D.C., 1981

Responses to Inquiries

All of the project agencies, except one, had some means of recording information on persons making adoption inquiries. One agency used a waiting list for all families who inquired about adoption. Two of the agencies used intake forms which included the name, address, age, and telephone number of the person making the inquiry. A "Family Inquiry Tracking Form" was provided to the one county without a system in place. The "Family Inquiry Tracking Form" (see page 46) was recommended for use in all four counties.

An additional concern was the nature of the agency's follow-up after the initial inquiry. Project staff emphasized that impersonal follow-up, such as written correspondence, could result in a loss of Black families. Agency staff were encouraged to make home visits immediately after the initial inquiry. An article entitled "How to Keep Black Families After They Apply" was shared with all project counties. (Refer to Appendix I.)

Are People Placed on "Hold"?

The second issue to be addressed involved the time frame for processing inquiries about adoption. Timely response is necessary to retain a large percentage of applicants and is essential for the establishment and maintenance of agency credibility in the community. If an applicant is placed on hold after responding to a recruitment effort which said that the agency needed Black families, then the credibility of the agency can be damaged. It is essential that an immediate response is made to all applicants to acknowledge their interest, to answer any questions, to give information, and to inform the applicant of the next steps in the preparation process.

Screening Applications

If applications are used as a screening-out technique, it is possible to eliminate many potential families before a rapport can be developed between the prospective family and the adoption worker. When this method is used, applicants are assessed on external criteria, for example, age, marital status, income, or education level, rather than qualities which seem to be good indicators for successful adoption. Although there are still eligibility criteria, such as residency in a state, or minimum age, the following qualities are important.

- a desire to nurture
- flexibility
- experience in weathering crises reasonably well
- the ability to form lasting relationships, or maintain relationships over a period of time

- perseverence
- empathy
- a sense of humor
- sufficient physical stamina to parent
- psychological "room in their life" for an additional child or children *

We should not search for "perfect" parents, but must look realistically for "good enough" parents who, with all their problems and shortcomings, have the qualities mentioned above.

Handling Case Volume

In conferences with the project agencies, discussions were directed toward agency responses to a possible influx of inquiries. Project staff provided counties with information on various group preparation processes used by other agencies, such as the Children Unlimited Adoption Curriculum and the TEAM** approach to group preparation. "Group process" was recommended to facilitate working with a larger number of adoptive applicants.

Friends of Black Children staff also recommended: (1) that the adoption preparation process include information on the adjustments of the older child to adoption; (2) that local Black adoptive parents be included in the preparation of prospective adoptive parents; and (3) that the adoption procedures be fully explained to applicants. Resource information, readings, and films that could be used in the group preparation were shared with the adoption worker.

Keeping Track of Children and Families

Agencies involved in the first year of Friends of Black Children were asked to participate based upon information from two sources: (1) the North Carolina Division of Social Services Child Placement Information Tracking System data about Black children without homes; and (2) the number of potential Black resource families available in the local county for children in the participating counties and other North Carolina counties.

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* Sullivan, Ann, Region IV Adoption Resource Center, Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979.

** Refer to Appendix II.

Keeping Track of the Children

During the initial months of the project, we discovered a discrepancy in the number of children in need of adoption services reported in June, 1982 by the state tracking system and the number of children identified by the local county Departments of Social Services as waiting for adoptive placement. There were three reasons for the discrepancy: (1) information obtained in June, 1982, had not been updated to show children who were in adoptive placement whose final order had not been issued; (2) in some cases the foster parents had expressed interest in adopting so recruitment was not appropriate at the time; and (3) the permanency placement plans had changed for some of the children. This suggested that there was a crucial need to keep better track of children who needed homes.

A "Child Information Form" (see page 48) was developed to be used as a case management tool to assist counties in their efforts to keep track of, or review the current status of, placement activities for waiting children.

Project staff worked with agencies to obtain correct and current data on the number of children legally free for adoption and those for whom adoption was the plan. In addition, a means was developed to collect on-going data regarding the changes in status. While it was important to have accurate data throughout the state, it was even more critical to develop the family resources for children legally free, and for those children who would become legally free for adoption.

Keeping Track of Families

By specifically identifying the waiting children, agencies were better prepared to recruit families who could parent available children. The agencies also had a clearer idea of the number of families needed and dates when they would be needed.

It became clear during the demonstration project year that all of the children reported were "special needs" children. They were school-age children, sibling groups, or children with physical or mental handicaps. All of the project agencies indicated that they wanted to recruit families who could parent these types of children. Yet there was no initial consensus as to the number of approved families the agencies would like to have. Agencies were willing to work with all Black families who applied since the need was so critical. The importance of making definite decisions which could help to focus both the agency and community efforts and serve as a good indicator of the effectiveness of the efforts was stressed.

Prior to the project, there was a total of four Black families approved to adopt younger children in the four project counties. All project counties acknowledged the critical need to have a pool of approved Black families waiting to adopt Black children. They indicated a willingness to work with all Black applicants for adoption, not only on behalf of children in their counties, but for Black children who wait across the state. The "Family Inquiry Tracking Form" presented on the next page was used to monitor the status of potential adoptive parents.

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN

FAMILY INQUIRY TRACKING FORM

Name of family _____ Date of contact _____

Address _____ Phone (Day) _____

_____ (Evening) _____

Source of Referral: _____

Nature of Inquiry (include type of child interested in, e.g. age, special needs, etc):

_____

_____

_____

Specific Action Taken (include dates) _____

_____

_____

Date attended informational meeting: _____

Date application received by agency: _____

Preparation process initiated? ___ Yes, Date_____. ___No, Why not?

_____

_____

Preparation process completed? ___ Yes, Date_____. ___No, Why not?

_____

_____

Family recommended for placement? ___ Yes, Date_____. ___No, Why not?

_____

_____

Type of child recommended for family: _____

_____

_____

Date of placement: _____

Characteristics of child placed: _____

_____

_____

Another barrier to the timely placement of Black children was the lack of cooperation between some county Departments of Social Services. Our efforts through this project can serve as a model for other agencies in the state; children were placed from counties other than project counties with families recruited by the Friends of Black Children effort.

An additional concern was the number of Black children who remained with their foster families with the hope that these families would adopt them. Often these plans failed to materialize and it continued to be necessary to develop adoptive family resources.

CHILD INFORMATION FORM FOR CHILDREN LEGALLY FREE FOR ADOPTION AND/OR FOR WHOM ADOPTION IS THE PLAN

NAME AND/OR IDENTIFICATION NUMBER OF THIS CHILD: _____

RACE: _____ SEX: _____

BIRTHDATE: _____ COUNTY: _____

1. Date of last Foster Care placement ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

2. Date on which Adoption became plan ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

3. Is this child legally free for Adoption? ____Yes ____No

   If "Yes," date of termination of parental rights ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

   If "No," is Adoption the plan for this child ____Yes ____No

   If Adoption is the plan for this child, please state what must be accomplished before this child will be legally free for Adoption.

   If Adoption is no longer the plan, date on which plan changed ___/___/___ (mo day yr)
   What is the new plan?

4. Does this child have any handicapping conditions? ____Yes ____No
   If "Yes," please list.

5. Does this child have any siblings? ____Yes ____No
   If "Yes," how many? ____ Please list their names.

6. Has this child ever had an Adoption placement to disrupt? ____Yes ____No
   If "Yes," how many? ____ Date of last disruption ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

7. Please include any additional information about this child.

8. Has this child been registered with the State Adoption Exchange?
   ____Yes ____No If "Yes," date of registration ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

9. Please list all other attempts that have been made to recruit families for this particular child.

10. Date of Adoptive placement ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

11. Did this placement disrupt? ____Yes ____No
    If "Yes," date of disruption ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

12. Date petition filed ___/___/___ (mo day yr) 13. Date of final order ___/___/___ (mo day yr)

Mid Year Project Review

There was widespread initial enthusiasm among agency personnel about the Friends of Black Children project. Six months after start-up, agency personnel were still enthusiastic about the initial training sessions for agency staff (See Appendix I). At the training session, staff from all four agencies convened at the Aqueduct Conference Center in Chapel Hill to explore issues in the adoption of Black children, how the media affects stereotypes of ethnic groups, and language or communication barriers to cross-cultural understanding. After six months of the Friends of Black Children project, agency personnel most frequently mentioned this training as an important opportunity. Moreover, agency personnel were enthusiastic about the concept and philosophy of the Friends of Black Children model: that agencies and communities could work together to find homes for Black children.

After six months of implementation, many challenges and problems had emerged within each of the four project agencies. Four concerns were predominant.

First, agency personnel commented that the time commitment required to implement the Friends of Black Children model was greater than they had anticipated. At least two of the agencies had completed permanency planning training just prior to the project and were a bit exhausted. Staff at two agencies expressed concern about the need to meet with community people in the evenings; one social worker requested and received compensatory time. Two of the four agency directors stated that they had had initial reservations about participating in the project due to the time commitment that would be required.

A second concern involved the "racial" nature of the project with respect to children needing homes and to the requirement that agencies involve Black staff in the project. A cross-section of personnel in all four agencies denied that they had any difficulties placing Black children or working with the Black community, despite conflicting community reports and the conclusions one could draw based on the data from the state foster care tracking system. At least two agencies were particularly offended by the message of the need for Black social workers. The shocked and defensive initial reactions, however, later softened to acceptance of the positive role that a Black representative of the agency could have. All four agency directors were white; three of the four adoption workers were white; and three of the four adoption supervisors were white. None of the project agency directors or supervisors were sure why they were selected for project participation since they did not perceive their agency to have problems with placing Black children.

Third, a mixture of staff and administrators in every agency complained either of role confusion between Friends of Black Children staff, agency, and Council, or about a vague implementation strategy for Friends of Black Children. Roles and expectations had become, after six months, a serious concern. One permanency planning worker commented, "We thought Friends of Black Children had a real plan for getting children out of foster care and they would help us implement their blueprint. It took us a while to accept that each community had to develop its own plan."

Much of the confusion about roles involved working with Community Councils. This fourth area of concern was due, in some cases, to the agency's perception that the Community Councils were disorganized and chaotic. This area of concern could be related to the agencies' lack of positive experiences with local grassroots community or voluntary organizations.

Other concerns were that Councils would increase expectations of the community about the availability of children when each agency maintained that children were not available. All agencies reported that, prior to Friends of Black Children, community outreach was not a usual part of agency procedure in adoption. Yet, after six months of implementation, two of the four agencies reported that they had more Black community resources to call on as a result of the project.

These concerns were addressed with each agency by project staff on an on-going basis throughout the project year. The next section will detail the process of implementation in each of the four project agencies.

The Project Agencies:

Descriptions and Recommendations

There was considerable variation in both the implementation process and the outcomes for each of the four Departments of Social Services which were involved in the Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project. To illustrate the similarities and differences among agencies, each of them is described below.

Agency A

Agency Preparation

The staff involved in the initial on-site visit to the agency included: the director, adoption supervisor, adoption worker, and foster care worker. Tasks were identified and roles and expectations for all participants were discussed using the project agreement as a guide. One full-time worker was assigned to respond to inquiring families. At this first meeting, Friends of Black Children staff and agency personnel also discussed the schedule for on-site visits and the expected time commitment.

Since the adoption worker was white, the agency identified a Black worker from the Food Stamps office to serve, with the adoption worker, as agency liaison to the Friends of Black Children Community Council. It should be noted that the Chairperson for the Friends of Black Children Community Council in this county was eventually employed by the Department of Social Services as a food stamps worker.

Agency Policies and Procedures

The procedure used by Agency A was to mail application forms and income statements to persons inquiring about adoption. When this information was returned, it was reviewed by an adoption committee, consisting of the agency director, the adoption supervisor, and the adoption worker. The adoption committee then made a recommendation for the adoption worker to continue or not to continue with the adoption assessment. The strong emphasis was on the economic stability of a particular family, particularly regarding savings.

Individual interviews were conducted with families. The demand for adoption services was not large enough to justify group preparation of families. In five years only two Black families had applied for adoption services.

This agency agreed to allow families to "screen" themselves out of the system by eliminating the practice of prior screening by the agency. The agency agreed: (1) to restructure the financial statement, and (2) to discuss financial information only after the adoption worker had had several visits with adoptive applicants, thereby allowing a relationship to develop first.

Agency A had no county-specific adoption recruitment materials available. Friends of Black Children recommended the development of local posters and brochures. Later in the project year, staff recommended the videotaping of the children legally free and awaiting placement. The tape was used by Community Council members in recruitment meetings and as a tool for sharing information with adoptive applicants.

Based on the need for quick follow-up to adoption inquiries, the agency voluntarily opted to: (1) have all adoption inquiries channelled through the adoption worker; (2) have direct contact with adoptive applicants through home visits, within three working days, and (3) complete adoption assessments within sixty days.

The profiles of children waiting for adoptive parents included siblings and a child with significant medical problems. Specific information on children legally free and/or for whom adoption was the plan was maintained on the "Child Information Form." (See page 48.)

Forms were developed for tracking families as well as children. (See page 46.) The forms for tracking families were developed as a supervisory tool, to show the agencies how families tended to move through their system and the time between contacts with families.

Relationship with the Community

The agency participated in recruitment meetings held in areas familiar to the Black community such as churches and masonic lodges. The agency agreed to have staff available at recruitment meetings to share agency specific information on the families needed, the children waiting, and the agency requirements for adoption as well as foster care.

The agency did not have any prior experiences with recruiting volunteers in the Black community. There was some initial reservation about whether or not such an effort as Friends of Black Children would work in this particular county. However a spirited and positive working relationship developed between the agency and Council.

Recommendations

During the project year, several recommendations were made to Agency A. Those recommendations preceded by an asterisk (*) are those which were implemented:

* 1. Adopt change in intake procedure. Suggested that agency allow families to decide if adoption was/was not appropriate; elimination of screening by Adoption Committee.

* 2. Revise intake form. Also recommended changes for financial and application forms.

3. Initiate group preparation for adoptive parents. Agency A has been unable to implement thus far because there have been too few applicants to begin a group.

* 4. Include adoptive parents as resource persons in preparation of families for adoption.

* 5. Provide general information at Informational Meetings; include agency requirements for adoption and foster care.

* 6. Develop and distribute a pamphlet on adoption and foster care needs; use of agency-specific brochures.

* 7. Participate in Community Council outreach efforts.

Agency B

Agency Preparation

The initial on-site visit to the agency included the following persons: the assistant director, a foster care worker, three protective services workers, a permanency planning worker, the adoption worker, the adoption supervisor, and a clerical supervisor. The clerical supervisor and permanency planning worker were Black. Issues covered in the Project Agreement were discussed over several meetings.

Friends of Black Children emphasized the need to include Black staff in this effort. The permanency planning worker agreed to serve as agency liaison to the Community Council along with the adoption worker.

Agency Policies and Procedures

In reviewing agency policy and procedures, it was found that the agency was not involved in active recruitment for adoptive homes. The present adoption worker had been hired within the past year. Prior to that, the agency had been without an adoption worker for approximately two years. Only "routine" adoption work had been done in this two-year period. This was limited to independent, step-parent, and relative adoption. The adoption supervisor or other agency staff had handled this work.

During this period, any prospective applicants had their names placed on a waiting list. Periodically, the adoption worker pulled names from

the list, contacted the parties to see if they continued to be interested, and began the adoption assessment. In some cases, the time lapse between the initial contact and the agency follow-up was several years.

Once contacted the prospective applicants were invited to an adoption group. There were three one and one-half hour sessions with the following emphases:

1. Overview of the adoption process/placement process;
   Written assignment - Life stories

2. A description of the children and how they enter the system

3. Characteristics of children

4. Review of the legal steps of adoption

5. Sharing of an adoption bibliography

The groups were not regularly scheduled. There were usually three to four follow-up visits after the group sessions.

In preparing the agency for recruitment, agency responses to inquiries and the availability of agency-specific information were discussed. The agency had considerable reservation about their ability to respond promptly to inquiries. They felt that they could respond by phone, letter, or individual interviews, but they did not feel that they could commit at the point of initial inquiry to a time for group preparation. At several of the Community Council meetings, the agency liaisons felt a need to explain why persons being referred could not be given more definite information.

No recruitment tools were being utilized except pamphlets and brochures provided by the state. These pamphlets and brochures had no agency-specific information. It was recommended that the agency develop a brochure which accurately described the procedure from the point of inquiry to the point that the agency recommended placement.

Most changes recommended by Friends of Black Children were designed to eliminate the possibility of sending mixed messages to the Black community. For instance, it would be unwise to launch a recruitment effort only to have people placed on a waiting list. The agency also needed to decrease the amount of time between the initial inquiry and agency follow-up. Further, in view of the kinds of families targeted for recruitment (those who would parent school-age children, siblings, and children with physical/mental limitations), Friends of Black Children staff recommended that greater emphasis be placed on adjustments of older children during parent preparation.

The agency participated in recruitment meetings sponsored in churches or other areas familiar to the Black community. The agency made staff available at recruitment meetings to share specific information on the

families needed, children waiting, and the agency requirements for adoption as well as foster care.

Relationship with the Community

The agency was asked to assess how the agency was perceived by the Black community. In service areas other than adoption, they felt that the agency had a negative image. However, with regard to adoption, they were uncertain of their image. Later, it became clear through Community Council meetings that the Black community was definitely unsure of the agency's adoption procedures. For example, one of the questions asked was, "Is it true that you have to stay out of work two years if you want to adopt a baby?" In fact, the agency had previously had a requirement that adoptive mothers remain home for two years after the placement. This requirement had been changed. However, there had been no outreach by the agency to inform the public of the change.

Recommendations

During the project year, several recommendations were made to Agency B. The recommendations with an asterisk (*) are those which were implemented:

1. Provide speedy, personal response to inquiries.

* 2. Eliminate waiting list for Black families.

* 3. Initiate group preparation of families to include more information on the adjustments of older children.

4. Include adoptive parents/foster parents in preparation of families.

* 5. Collaborate on an information handout on adoption. Develop county-specific pamphlet.

* 6. Educate the Community Council about the limited staffing situation of the agency.

* 7. Set routine schedules for group preparation.

Agency C

Agency Preparation

Several members of the Department of Social Services staff were present for the initial on-site visit. They included: the agency director, program administrator, adoption supervisor, two adoption workers, and three social workers from the protective services/permanency planning unit.

Agency C did not have a Black adoption worker. The agency chose to involve Black staff to serve as liaisons to the Council. This staff included the three workers from protective services/permanency planning.

Agency Policies and Procedures

Prior to Friends of Black Children, County C used a two-step procedure for responding to adoption inquiries: (1) arrange an office visit by written correspondence or by telephone, and (2) schedule subsequent home visits. The agency had been successful in placing a significanc number of pre-school Black children in the the past. All placements for school-age children had been made with families in other counties. The agency responded to persons interested in adoption services based on self-referrals.

It was recommended that the agency make initial contacts by home visits instead of office visits. Use of adoption groups to prepare families was also suggested. To facilitate better understanding of agency policy, agency-specific brochures and posters were developed by the agency. The poster developed by the agency received a community service award for creativity.

Agency C used its capacity to videotape waiting Black children. This county later videotaped a couple who had adopted twin siblings. This pioneer effort was very successful and was recommended to all project counties.

The agency decided to channel all referrals to one worker for follow up within forty-eight hours. Individual interviews were used to prepare prospective adoptive parents. The adoption application was revised to delete information on fertility and a request for extensive job histories.

Prior to engaging in outreach efforts, the agency agreed to maintain records of families inquiring and records of all children needing placement.

Relationship with the Community

To establish initial contact in the community, the agency identified Black leaders in the community. The initial correspondence seeking community support was sent out by the agency. Agency staff was present at all Community Council meetings, and participated in recruitment meetings held in various communities in areas familiar to the Black community. Staff attended these meetings to present current information on adoption, types of families needed, children waiting, and agency requirements for foster care and adoption. The agency was very supportive of Council activities and provided the necessary filing fee for incorporation of the Community Council.

Recommendations

Several recommendations were made to Agency C during the project

year. The recommendations preceded by an asterisk (*) are those which were implemented:

1. Initiate group preparation.

* 2. Publish numbers of satellite offices on all recruitment brochures and posters for communities located so far from the central office that telephone calls to the agency would be long distance.

3. Use support groups for adoptive parents and ask adoptive parents to participate in group preparation.

5. Adapt information from TEAM approach and Children's Unlimited curriculum for group preparati...

* 6. Video-tape children who are waiting for families.

* 7. Make changes in application/financial statement for adoptive applicants.

Agency D

Agency Preparation

The initial on-site visit to the agency included the adoption supervisor, adoption worker, permanency planning supervisor, and foster care worker. Those present included a Black adoption worker.

The agency staff identified an initial list of Black community leaders and informed all staff about the project. Subsequent meetings with the agency addressed evaluation of present policies and procedures in responding to recruitment efforts. This agency had in place an active adoption support group, group preparation of adoptive parents using the TEAM approach, and group preparation of foster parents. There had been some recruitment efforts in the past, however, the only on-going activity was an agency-sponsored general informational meetings held bi-monthly for anyone interested in adoption and foster care. These meetings were held in a predominantly white community.

Agency Policies and Procedures

Standard operating procedure for the agency involved several steps.

1. Obtain basic information on persons making an inquiry.

2. Invite persons to attend an informational meeting.

3. Follow-up with written correspondence giving dates of agency-sponsored informational meetings for the rest of the calendar year.

4. Mail out application.

5. Invite persons returning applications to attend group preparation sessions.

6. Have applicant attend group preparation sessions.

7. Written assessment completed by by adoption worker.

8. Approval from adoption committee.

The agency's attitude toward work hours was flexible. Agency recruitment, informational meetings and group preparation sessions were held at night. Individual preparation was used when it was impossible for individuals or couples to attend sessions at designated times. The agency had a brochure for dissemination in the county.

The agency expressed an interest in alternating recruitment/ informational meetings with the Council. Through this arrangement the public would have an informational source available on a monthly basis. The agency had a copy of the Black recruitment film, "Everybody Needs A Forever Home." This film was used frequently at Council recruitment meetings. (Refer to Appendix II for more information about this film.)

Relationship with the Community

The agency expressed concern about their inability to connect with Blacks living in the county's rural areas. The bulk of inquiries and applications were from blue or white collar workers living in the major urban city of the county. Concern was expressed about the high number of applications mailed to prospective parents which were not returned.

Recommendations

During the project year, several recommendations were made to Agency D. The recommendations preceded by an asterisk (*) are those which were implemented:

1. Provide additional follow-up after the Informational meetings for families who did not respond.

* 2. Add locations for Informational meetings to extend into Black communities and other areas beyond the major city.

* 3. Modify procedures to allow some contact with families prior to mailing application. Agency opted to have the adoption worker assist applicants with the completion of the application forms. A worker was available at all recruitment meetings to assist applicants.

Checklist of Effective Social Work Practices

As can be seen from the profiles, agencies faced a number of challenges in developing bonds with the Black community. Friends of Black Children staff assisted each agency in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and in highlighting areas in which change was needed.

The checklist on the following page can be used as an assessment inventory to help agencies develop effective social work strategies for working with Black families and communities.

CHECKLIST OF EFFECTIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES WHEN WORKING WITH BLACK FAMILIES

Answer the following questions as yes, no, or sometimes.

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
1. Does your agency review and evaluate policies on an on-going basis to keep abreast of current practices?			
2. Does your agency routinely respond to inquiries within two working days or 48 hours?			
3. Does your agency routinely meet with prospective applicants after 5 PM on workdays or on weekends?			
4. Is your agency's initial interview with the prospective applicant done in the family's home?			
5. Does your agency have frequent and consistent outreach with the Black community through civic organizations, churches, social clubs, etc?			
6. Does your agency request financial information from a family ONLY <u>after</u> a relationship with the family has been established?			
7. Are application forms simple and clear of requests for unnecessary information (such as fertility, complete work history, etc.)?			
8. Has your agency provided opportunities for staff to attend conferences, seminars or workshops on the cultural differences and strengths of Black families?			
9. Does your agency have adequate and appropriate preparation of families to deal with issues of adopting older chidren?			
10. Does your agency have available an option of group preparation to increase potential support for families completing the process?			
11. Does your agency routinely involve Black adoptive families in the recruitment and preparation of prospective families?			
12. Does your agency have a network of Black professionals and colleagues outside the agency to whom you can turn for advice or assistance?			
13. Does your agency assist families in securing documents, such as birth certificates?			

Give your agency one point for every "yes" answer, one-half point for every "sometimes," and zero points for every "no." Add your scores and compare your total with the scale below..

SCORE:	13 TO 11	Excellent	8 TO 7	Fair
	10 TO 9	Good	below 7	Poor

A Final Word

The essential aspects of the social services agencies' involvement with the Friends of Black Children Project have been described. It is not necessary that all aspects of the agency involvement be implemented before organizing a Community Council. Changes suggested can take place simultaneously with the organization of Community Councils. The involvement of the community in the examination of agency policies can serve to facilitate the development of good working relationships with the community.

The process involved in implementing a community organization and systems change approach takes time. This approach should be viewed as a developmental process with all the joys and pain inherent in making changes. The process of implementation of the Friends of Black Children model evolved over a twelve month period. At times, agency expectations of the project and of the community created conflict and frustrations for participants. Taking the whole effort a few steps at a time with built in monthly evaluation/assessment, can minimize frustration and discouragement.

With the implementation of the Friends of Black Children project, there were expectations that there would be a huge influx of Black families applying to adopt. Additionally, it was expected that if not a huge influx, then surely there would be a steady flow of families. When agency staff expressed these expectations it was helpful to suggest that they ask themselves several questions.

- Where were we before our effort began?
- How many Black families have applied to adopt or been approved to adopt in the past one year; the past five years?
- Are we seeing an increase in the number of Black family inquiries? These inquiries, if not followed-through immediately, may be future potential resources.
- How many Black families are in the application process or approved for adoption currently?
- What is the level of our commitment to this effort?
- Do we expect miraculous results immediately or are we willing to "stick to it" for the sake of long lasting impact?
- Do we want a quick fix?

- What is the nature of our anxiety, if any about citizen participation in our service delivery program?

- Are we willing to risk possible criticism to achieve understanding with the community?

The answers to the above questions were not always easy to reach, but our experiences in working with social services agencies taught us to raise these questions as a way of helping the agency to assess their level of commitment, the nature of their involvement, and the extent of their knowledge, not only about the short-term impact, but about the long-term impact of such an approach. No human effort is perfect, but we must strive for understanding and appreciation for diversity with the goal of good communication.

There is no doubt that this effort does require dedication, commitment, and total involvement in order to achieve success. It is up to each of you to decide whether you are ready for the challenge but rewarding experiences which will face you not only from assessing and changing agency policies and practices, but the involvement of the community as well. Do you want to take the risk for the children in our system who wait in disproportionate numbers and wait the longest to receive that permanent loving family?

As a result of agency participation in this project, the agencies gained:

1. increased requests for information about adoption and foster care;

2. increased opportunities to disseminate information about their adoption process and waiting children;

3. increased community support and available resources which the agency can call upon; and

4. opportunities to become part of a network of social services agencies who are involved in outreach to the Black community.

Some additional results that were reported included:

1. an increase in foster care homes;

2. renewed excitement about adoption and foster care among agency staff;

3. increased networking among adoptive parents and prospective parents; and

4. increased communication between adoption staff and other agency staff.

SECTION III

BLACK COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Overview

The success of the Friends of Black Children model depended upon the strength and commitment of local grassroots community volunteers. These volunteers, organized into Community Councils, used their knowledge of, and experience with, their communities to find homes for waiting Black children.

Local Friends of Black Children Community Councils were organized and developed in the four pilot counties beginning in December, 1982, two months after agency preparation began. These Councils were composed of Black citizens from all walks of life. The Community Councils' structure included officers and area-coordinators for each major community within each county. Speakers bureaus and publicity committees were also established. Orientation and training were provided for Council members about adoption procedures, waiting Black children, and strategies for recruitment in their local communities.

During the one-year demonstration project, there was evidence of the effectiveness of community involvement. For example, when the project began in October, 1982, the four social services agencies had approved a total of four Black families for adoption. By October, 1983, the four counties had approved twenty Black adoptive families. We believe that the help of community leaders made this difference.

In the next pages, we shall focus on the Friends of Black Children Community Councils. We specifically discuss the role of the Councils, the key people involved, Council organization, recruitment efforts, and Council relations with social service agencies. The experiences of each of the four Community Council are profiled.

Identifying Key People

With the assistance of the Friends of Black Children Staff, community volunteers, and the local county social services agencies, a list of prospective Council members was composed. This contact list included groups and individuals such as the following:

1. any individual whose position indicates interest in children;
2. local merchants, such as barbers, beauticians, morticians;
3. local or state politicians such as county commissioners, city council members, and state legislators;
4. professionals such as school teachers, attorneys, physicians;
5. foster and adoptive parents;
6. individuals with low or marginal incomes;
7. unskilled laborers;
8. factory workers;
9. retired individuals;
10. sororities such as Delta Sigma Theta or Alpha Kappa Alpha;
11. fraternities such as Omega Psi Phi or Kappa Alpha Psi;
12. clubs, such as Jack and Jill;
13. community organizations, such as NAACP, Urban League, SCLC;
14. child advocacy groups, such as affiliates of the National Black Child Development Institute or Child Watch; and
15. Black churches.

The above list should only be used as a guideline and is not meant to limit potential Community Council membership. In each community, special attention was given to see that a cross-section of people was invited to participate.

Using the initial contact list, letters of invitation to an organizational meeting were mailed, followed by telephone contacts to explain the projected role of the Council. A sample invitation is on the following page.

Letter was jointly written by the
Friends of Black Children Staff
and the social service agency.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

November 28, 1982

Dear _____:

We are pleased to invite you to serve as an active member of the County A Friends of Black Children Community Council. As a member of the community, we believe that you are in a good position to help us in our efforts to locate Black adoptive families for waiting Black children.

In the past, there has been an inadequate number of Black families in the state to adopt Black children. There are 3,234 Black children in the placement authority of local Departments of Social Services. Also, there are approximately 164 Black children legally free for adoption and another 428 across the state for whom adoption is the plan and who will eventually need families.

It is our conviction that this situation can be changed if the Black community is well informed of the needs of Black children. The Friends of Black Children Community Council can make a difference by helping us inform the Black community of the need. The Council will serve as a link between the Black community and the county Department of Social Services resulting in an increase in the number of Black families interested in adopting waiting Black children.

The first organizational meeting of the County A Friends of Black Children Community Council will be held on December 13, 1982 at 6:30 p.m. at the Henderson Building located directly across from Shiloh Baptist Church at 1020 E. Marshall Street, County A, North Carolina.

We look forward to working with you on behalf of waiting Black children. If you have any questions prior to our meeting, please call one of us at the number listed below our names.

Sincerely,

Organizing Community Councils

Agendas for the initial meetings were planned jointly by staff of the project and the Departments of Social Services. Project staff was responsible for facilitating the meeting and arranging for guest speakers or film presentations. The Departments of Social Services provided photos of waiting children and explained agency adoption procedures.

A temporary Chairperson was selected at the first organizational meeting. Installation of permanent officers was delayed until the second meeting of the Councils. It was necessary to wait for the second meeting because all of the townships in the county were not represented at the first meeting and in order to assess whether a cross-section of the community, including those persons with low and marginal incomes, were represented. Additional names were secured after the first Council meeting and through direct contact in the community by project staff. A sample agenda for the first organizational meeting is on the next page.

Sample Agenda of the

First Organizational Meeting

OF THE

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COUNTY A

DECEMBER 13, 1982

6:30 p.m. - 7:00	Informal Discussion	
7:00 - 7:30	Opening Remarks Overview of Project	Helen J. Berry, Project Director Friends of Black Children
7:30 - 7:50	What's Happening in the Local Agency	Agency Staff
7:50 - 8:10	Impact of Adoptions Support Groups	Black Adoption Support Group Representative, if available
8:10 - 8:30	Role of Friends of Black Children Council	Lottie Sneed, Program Specialist Friends of Black Children
8:30 - 8:50 p.m.	Election of Temporary Chairperson Plans for Next Council Meeting	Project Staff

Friends of Black Children Community Council Structure

An essential part of the organization of the Community Council was the clarification of the duties and responsibilities of the Council officers.

Generally, the roles of the officers were as follows:

Chairperson

Arrange, coordinate, and conduct business and recruitment-informational meetings.

Participate on the Speaker's Bureau. (Speak to local groups, i.e. churches, auxiliaries, clubs, organizations, PTA, etc.)

Coordinate activities of Council and local Department of Social Services.

Invite guest presenters (Project Staff, DSS Staff, State and local organizations) to speak to Council members and to the general public.

Vice-Chairperson

Coordinate meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

Assist with the work of the Chairperson and perform any duties as assigned by Chairperson.

Where a Publicity Chairperson has not been appointed, the Vice-Chairperson is responsible for publicity, in consultation with the Chairperson.

Participate on the Speakers Bureau.

Chair the membership committee.

Accept and forward all adoption or foster care referrals from the Council members to the adoption worker at the local Department of Social Services.

Publicity Chairperson

Coordinate all publicity activities in consultation with Friends of Black Children Project staff, Department of Social Services staff, and Area Coordinators.

Disseminate pamphlets, posters, and other materials to churches, businesses, schools, civic clubs, etc.

Coordinate speaking engagements in consulation with Chairperson.

Secretary

Keep minutes of meetings. Send copies of minutes to the local Department of Social Services and Friends of Black Children Project.

Send news releases to local newpapers.

Send Public Service Announcements to local radio stations.

Send mailings about Council recruitment/business meetings.

Write correspondence for Council.

Develop and maintain a mailing list of all Council members, officers, and community resources.

Area Coordinators

Arrange Recruitment-Informational meetings in their areas. This includes locating sites, checking to see if screens will be needed for movies, arranging for refreshments, and providing for opening and closing of the facility. Coordinators are expected to arrive at the meeting site at least 30 minutes prior to the meeting time to set up and greet guests.

Disseminate pamphlets and/or posters to churches, Black businesses, civic and social organizations in their area.

Speak to local groups, i.e. PTA, church auxiliaries, clubs, and organizations.

Report monthly to Chairperson about adoption inquiries and other matters.

Attend monthly meetings of Council.

There were four major committees. All committee members were provided with a list of Council membership. Any additions to the list were forwarded to the Secretary. Generally, the roles of the committees are as follows:

Publicity Committee

Plan and coordinate all publicity activities with the Publicity Chairperson, i.e. radio, television, newspaper. Arrange and schedule interviews.

Prepare news releases and public service announcements to be sent out by the Secretary.

Disseminate pamphlets, posters, and other publicity materials to area coordinators for distribution, especially prior to recruitment campaigns and informational meetings.

Membership Committee

Chaired by Vice-Chairperson.

Continuously seek new members to the Community Council.

Provide a list of prospective members to the Secretary so that invitations can be extended from the Council.

Conduct at least two membership campaigns per year.

Telephone Committee

Call members and prospective members prior to business and recruitment-informational meetings. Should remind members to announce meetings in their areas.

Speakers Bureau

Speak to local groups, i.e. churches, auxilaries, clubs, organizations, PTA, about the Friends of Black Children Community Council and the need for adoptive families for Black children.

Identify a person on the Committee to schedule and coordinate speaking engagements. Maintain a Speakers Register to be used to keep a record of all speaking engagements. (See next page.)

SPEAKER'S BUREAU REGISTER

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION	CONTACT PERSON ADDRESS & PHONE	DATE, TIME & PLACE	SPEAKER/OR ALTERNATE

Planning Activities of the Councils

The agendas for the second meetings of the Councils were prepared jointly by the temporary Chairpersons, agency liaisons, and project staff. (See the next page for a sample agenda of the second meeting.) The following items were submitted to the full Council for approval:

1. That the Council embark on active recruitment efforts to find Black adoptive families. These activities should be determined by the interests and imagination of the Council leaders.

2. That "area coordinators" be identified in each major community in the county to arrange accommodations for recruitment-informational meetings and to disseminate information on adoption in their respective communities. At least one coordinator should be identified for each major area or neighborhood.

3. That business sessions be held bi-monthly or monthly at a centralized location in each county. These meetings should be used to plan the work of the Council, including all public awareness and recruitment acitvities. Agency procedures and policies regarding adoption and foster care should be explained at both the recruitment-informational and business meetings. Knowledge about how agencies function is crucial for Council members in their recruitment efforts as well as the establishment and maintenance of their credibility with the Black community. A sample business meeting agenda is presented on page 84.

4. That the Council sponsor bi-monthly adoption "recruitment meetings" in the community. These meetings should rotate to various communities in each county and are often held in a local Black churches. These meetings should be used to provide information to prospective adoptive and foster parents about the number of Black children needing homes, the length of time that Black children remain in foster care, as well as the large number of Black children in long term foster care situations. These meetings facilitate new members becoming affiliated with the Council and are helpful in recruiting prospective parents. A handbook for informational meetings was devised to assist Council members. (See pages 85 to 93.)

5. That the Council develop a tentative calendar of activities for the year. Sample calendar is presented on page 75.

6. That the Council approve an estimated budget and fundraising activities to meet the financial needs. A sample budget is presented on page 115.

SAMPLE AGENDA OF THE
SECOND ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

OF THE

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COUNTY A

JANUARY 17, 1983

7:00p.m. - 7:15	Opening Remarks	Chairperson, FBC Council
	Introduction of Representatives from Friends of Black Children and Local Social Services Agency	
7:15 - 8:00	Election of Officers Identifying Area Coordinators Identifying Meeting Sites Planning for February Informational	
8:00 - 8:20p.m.	Film: "Everybody Needs a Forever Home"	
	Adjournment	

Tentative Calendar for Council for Project Year*

DECEMBER, 1982
First Organizational Meeting

JANUARY, 1983
Second Organizational Meeting

FEBRUARY, 1983
Recruitment-Informational Meeting

MARCH, 1983
Business Meeting - Recruitment Strategies

APRIL, 1983
Recruitment-Informational Meeting

MAY, 1983
Business Meeting - Fundraising Activities, Incorporation Plans

JUNE, 1983
Recruitment-Informational Meeting

JULY, 1983
Business Meeting

AUGUST, 1983
Recruitment-Informational Meeting

SEPTEMBER, 1983
Business Meeting
Year-End Continuity Conference

OCTOBER, 1983
Recruitment-Informational Meeting

NOVEMBER, 1983
Business Meeting

DECEMBER, 1983
Business Meeting

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* All meetings should have a designated place, date and time schedule for each month.

Role of Friends of Black Children Community Councils

Frequently Council members wondered what actions were acceptable for them to take. Many prospective adoptive parents turned to Council members for advice. As Council members, they were able to:

1. get involved in recognizing real needs and bringing important resources to support efforts of local agencies by serving as the liaison between the local county Department of Social Services and Black community;

2. serve as extensions of agency staff in public education efforts especially in removing myths about adoption;

3. help in the location and recruitment of Black adoptive families who do not traditionally apply to public agencies to adopt;

4. provide post-placement support to adoptive families;

5. help identify funding sources (and fund raising areas/techniques) for continued work of the Friends of Black Children Council;

6. provide a personal touch to the prospective adoptive family;

7. share information about the adoption process in the county;

8. advocate on behalf of a potential adoptive applicant;

9. ask the social workers to explain adoption or foster care procedures; and

10. have fundraising activities.

Council members were important volunteer advocates for children. Still, it was important to keep in mind that the Department of Social Services had the legal authority and responsibility for waiting children. Therefore, as a Council members, they were not able to:

* conduct studies on families; or

* promise any particular child/children to any potential adoptive parent(s).

Working with the Agency

Council members and agency staff were encouraged to maintain contact with each other regarding recruitment efforts and the planning of agendas for the monthly meetings. There were two critical aspects to the community's involvement with the Department of Social Services. First, Council members learned about professional jargon. Second, Council members gained knowledge, and maintained current knowledge, about the local adoption situation.

Awareness of Professional Jargon

Like people in any occupation, social workers have their own language. Since Council members were dealing with social workers, they needed to become familiar with terms used. Some of these terms are:

1.	Workers	a quick way of saying social workers
2.	Inquiry	initial contact requesting general information on Council or adoption and foster care
3.	Study	a way of gathering and recording information regarding family functioning/dynamics, parenting abilities, strengths, weaknesses
4.	Adoption	legal process of enlarging a family
5.	Foster Care	temporary living arrangement, meant to be short term until a child returns home or is placed for adoption
6.	Special Needs	term used to describe children involved with adoption who are characterized by race, age, sibling groups, health, etc.
7.	Approved	used to describe family where there is a completed study, all information requested is gathered and there is a positive recommendation regarding parenting abilities
8.	Subsidy	financial assistance available for special needs children to help support them in their adoptive placement

9. Referral — follow-through on inquiries with public or private agencies regarding persons who want to adopt

10. DSS — Department of Social Services

11. Group preparation process — a way to present adoption information to prospective families about the adoption process, to answer any questions families may have in order to help them decide whether adoption is for their family. This process may afford prospective adoptive couples more flexibility because they often feel less pressure to please the social worker; allows more people to be prepared (cost-effective) at one time; adoptive parents may be resources at these group meetings.

12. Screen-in — special outreach effort undertaken by adoption staff to ease fears of prospective families regarding the adoption process, by using home visits, telephone calls, etc.; considering criteria for eligibility other than traditional ones such as eligibility of single parents or low-income people

13. The PALS Book — this is a photo listing of children across the state of North Carolina needing adoptive families

The words "Placed," "On Hold," and "Subsidy Available" are special terms which appear in the PALS Book. "Placed" means that that child was one of the lucky ones. "On Hold" means that a family has been identified for the child but the child has not been placed officially with that family.

"Subsidy Available" means that the agency with legal custody of the child will provide medical and/or financial assistance to a family interested in adopting that child. In some instances, assistance is available for legal fees.

Gaining Knowledge About Adoption

In addition to understanding professional jargon, Community Council members should know: (a) the legal steps for adoption, (b) the numbers of waiting children in the state and the local community, (c) who is eligible to adopt children, and (d) who can be foster parents.

What are the Legal Steps in Adopting a Child?

It is necessary to have court action to make an adoption legal. An attorney can be retained for filing the legal proceedings. The legal

fees are arranged between the adoptive parents and attorneys. In some areas, adoptive parents may be able to file the initial petition for adoption with the assistance of the Clerk of Court. It is possible to delay attorney services until the filing of the Final Order of Adoption.

The Court of Adoptions in North Carolina is a part of the Superior Court with the Clerks of Superior Court presiding. The recording of the adoption proceeding by the county Court of Adoption costs around $15.00. The State Social Services Agency registers all adoption proceedings.

The law relating to adoption is found in Chapter 48 of the General Statutes enacted by the 1949 General Assembly of North Carolina.

There are six steps in completing an adoption.

1. The first step is the filing of the Petition for Adoption signed by the adoptive parents. The petition is filed in the county of placement of the adoptive child(ren), or the county in which the adoptive parents live.

2. The second step is the filing of the Consent to the child's adoption given by the agency placing the child or by the biological parent, if the child was placed by the parents directly with the adoptive parents. The child-placing agency may assist the attorney, clerk of court, and adoptive parents in securing the necessary consent to the child's adoption. A child over twelve must also consent to his or her own adoption.

3. The third step is the Report on Proposed Adoption given the Court of Adoptions by a child-placing agency. This report on proposed adoption includes a history and family background of the child, the biological parents, and the adoptive parents; information about the adoptive home; and a description of how the child and adoptive parents are adjusting to each other. Reports of recent medical and psychological examinations of the child are a part of the Report on Proposed Adoption.

4. The fourth step is the issuance of the "Interlocutory Decree" by the court. This decree gives the adoptive parents custody of the child until the Final Order is issued. (This decree is provisional and may be rescinded or modified at any time prior to the Final Order. Until the Final Order is issued the child is a ward of the Court of Adoptions.) The period of time between the placement of a child and the Final Order is usually about a year. Following the placement of a child, a worker from the agency will provide post-placement support services for a year or longer if necessary. These will include visits to the adoptive home, assistance to the parents in solving problems, and answering questions which may arise. When post-placement support is completed, a Report on Placement is given to the Court of Adoptions by the agency. This includes information on the

adjustment and relationship of the child and adoptive parents. Post-placement support is completed when the child has become, in all important social respects, a member of the family.

5. The fifth step is the filing of the Final Order of Adoption which makes the child legally one of the family as though born to the adoptive parents. The child is able to inherit real and personal property as a biological child does.

6. The sixth and final step is the amendment of the Birth Certificate through the Office of Vital Statistics of the State Board of Health. The new certificate shows the adoptive parents as the parents.

How Many Waiting Children Are There?

The latest statistics on Black children waiting can be obtained from the local social services agency. In addition to this, Council members should always know the number, age, and gender of children in their local communities who need families.

Who Can Adopt?

There are some basic requirements for adoptive applicants in North Carolina.

1) Applicant must be at least 18 years old.

2) Applicant must have sufficient income to meet the needs of a child or children.

3) Applicant should have space within the home to accommodate the new member(s).

4) Applicant must be a resident of the county if services are desired from local Department of Social Services.

5) Medical examinations must be completed on family members.

6) Applicant must agree to participate in interview sessions for preparation to adopt.

Some Myths about adoption which are not true are that adoptive parents must:

1) be married;

2) not work after adopting;

3) own their home; and

4) have a high school diploma.

Who Can Be Foster Parents?

Information was also provided about foster care in the "recruitment-informational meetings." Foster care differs from adoption in that foster care is meant to be temporary care. Foster homes are needed as well as adoptive homes. Council members obtained information about the extent of the need for foster families for Black children in their areas. This will include information about number, age, and gender of the children.

Basic requirements for foster families in North Carolina are that they must:

1) be between 21 and 65 years old;

2) have adequate space for placement of a child or children in their home;

3) pass a health/sanitation inspection and a fire/safety inspection;

4) complete medicals on all members of the household;

5) have adequate income to meet the needs of present family members;

6) agree to participate in agency foster parent training; and

7) renew foster parent license annually.

Community Council Recruitment Activities

After Councils identified their members, selected officers, clarified their roles and devised ways of working with the agency, it was time to implement the action agenda determined by the tentative calendar. Working with the agencies, the Councils specified their activities before and after recruitment meetings. Councils engaged in a variety of activities, such as:

1. setting up information booths at area shopping malls, churches, parks, etc.

2. instituting Speakers' Bureaus

3. participating on television and radio talk shows

4. writing newspaper feature articles or editorials

5. requesting mayoral proclamations of "Adoption Day" or "Adoption Week"

6. distributing flyers at churches, community functions or newspaper stands

7. initiating door-to-door recruitment in local neighborhoods

8. sponsoring workshops and seminars

9. publishing brochures about the Community Councils and their goals

10. distributing brochures from adoption agencies

11. preparing a portable display board with pictures of the types of children available for adoption

12. subscribing to the PALS (Photo Adoption Listing Services) book and having it available at your informational meetings

13. showing films about adoption

14. selling or distributing buttons, baked goods, bumper stickers, etc.

All recruitment meetings were held in locations familiar and accessible to the Black community. Workshops and seminars were often used to educate the Black community about adoption. These workshops or seminars were held on a variety of topics.

* agency policies, available children, etc.

* adoptive parents discussing their experiences and answering questions

* child advocacy techniques and strategies

* how to organize a parent support group

* how to work with agencies

* special needs adoptions

Community Council leaders held business meetings each month before or after recruitment activities. A sample Agenda of a business meeting is presented on the following page. These business meetings had five purposes:

1) to expand knowledge about adoption among the membership;

2) to exchange information, and to develop relationships with the Departments of Social Services;

3) to review and evaluate Council recruitment activities;

4) to plan future recruitment activities; and

5) to plan for Community Council independence and continuation following the demonstration project year.

In the following pages, sample materials for use in teaching Community Council members how to conduct recruitment meetings are presented. It should be noted that initially information about foster care and adoption was provided by the local agency adoption worker or supervisor. A sample "script" of the Community Council presentation, sample Agendas and an Attendance Sheet are provided. Following these materials, suggested ways to handle adoption inquiries and referral forms that Community Council members can use are presented.

SAMPLE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

OF THE

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COUNTY A

WELCOME

MINUTES OF LAST BUSINESS MEETING

STATUS REPORT FROM VICE-CHAIRPERSON, AREA COORDINATORS, COMMITTEES

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

REPORT FROM DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

ADJOURNMENT

CONDUCTING RECRUITMENT MEETINGS

The following is a list of items needed for recruitment presentations.

1. Agenda for the meeting
2. Sign-In Sheets
3. Film or video of available children
4. Projector, screen, or video equipment, extension cord
5. Photo Adoptions Listings (PALS) Book
6. Pamphlets and Brochures

In order to have an effective recruitment meeting, Community Council members will need to know:

1. the number and characteristics of children waiting for adoption in your county;
2. foster care needs for your county;
3. future meeting dates and location for Community Council meetings;
4. if agency offers recruitment-informational meetings, dates & places for those meetings;
5. if agency does group preparation, the date for next group;
6. if agency does individual work with families, what is the procedure?

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN RECRUITMENT-INFORMATIONAL MEETING

"A SEARCH FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE"

I.	Introduction	Friends of Black Children Community Council Chairperson
II.	Current Focus	Friends of Black Children Community Council Chairperson
III.	Characteristics of Children Needing Substitute Care a. Foster Care b. Adoption c. Children Waiting for Homes	Friends of Black Children or Agency Adoption Staff
IV.	Basic Requirements for Sustitute Care a. Foster Care b. Adoption	Friends of Black Children or Agency Adoption Staff
V.	Film	
VI.	Wrap Up - What's Next?	

SAMPLE ATTENDANCE SHEET
FOR A FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN
COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

COUNTY:_____ MEETING:_____ DATE:_____

NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE NO.	ARE YOU A COUNCIL MEMBER YES/NO	ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ADOPTION? YES/NO*	ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FOSTER CARE? YES/NO*

* Denotes persons who would like to make an application for adoption or foster care.

SAMPLE "SCRIPT" FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

In the beginning of the project, agency staff provided information about adoption and foster care at the recruitment meetings. However, after several meetings, Council members were encouraged to provide this information to the community, with assistance from agency staff.

Council members often wondered what to say at the community recruitment meetings. For this reason, we developed a sample "script" that Council members could use as a guide. Of course, this script should be amended to adapt to local needs. However, the following script illustrates a presentation by a Council member.

Opening Remarks:

Good evening. My name is _____. I am _____ for the _____ County Friends of Black Children Council. We are assembled here because you have an interest in the welfare of Black children. Before leaving tonight, I hope that you will have a better understanding of the number of Black children that are presently waiting to be adopted and the kind of families that are needed for these children.

Statewide* there are approximately ___ children legally free for adoption. Legally free for adoption means that the birth parents of these children have no legal rights to these children and that these children are waiting in foster homes, group homes, or institutions for adoptive families to be found. _____ percent of all children in this state needing adoptive homes are Black although Black children comprise only _____ percent of the total number of children in this state.

The PALS book is a photo listing of children across the state needing adoptive families. When you look through the book and you do not see pictures of Black healthy infants, do not feel that these children are not available. THEY ARE!!! Generally, Black infants do not have to wait for adoptive families. Also, do not think that all the children in the PALS Book have multi-handicaps. For most, their biggest handicap is being 7 years old or older, having brothers and sisters that need to be adopted, or being a Black male.

As you browse through the PALS Book, you will notice the words "PLACED," "ON HOLD," and "SUBSIDY AVAILABLE" on some of

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* Information should be obtained from local/state social service agency.

the pages. If you see the word "PLACED," it means that that child was one of the lucky ones and has been adopted. If you see the word "ON HOLD," that means that a family has been identified for the child but the child has not been placed officially with that family.

When you see "SUBSIDY AVAILABLE," it means that the agency with legal custody of the child will provide medical and/or financial assistance to a family interested in adopting that child. In some instances, assistance is available for legal fees.

Now that we have talked about the State picture, let's look at our local* picture. We have ____ children needing homes right now in _____ County. They are:

_____ age _____

_____ age _____

_____ age _____

Now to become eligible to adopt any of these waiting children, there are some basic requirements for adoptive applicants. They are:

1) You must be at least 18 years old.

2) You must have sufficient income to meet the needs of a child or children.

3) You should have space within the home to accommodate the new addtion(s).

4) You must be a resident of our county if you want services from local Department of Social Services.

5) Medicals must be completed on family members.

6) You must agree to participate in interview sessions for preparation of your adoption.

Some Myths that you may have heard about adoption which are not true are:

1) You have to be married.

2) You can not work after adopting.

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* Information should be obtained from local social service agency.

3) You have to own your home.

4) You have to have a high school diploma.

These are untruths and will not be determining factors in whether you can or cannot adopt.

If you are interested in adoption, please indicate that on the sign-in sheet, along with your name, address, and telephone number. For your information, the adoption worker's name is _____. His/Her telephone number is _____. This information is on the pamphlet that was passed out to you.

Some of you may have come tonight because you have an interest in foster care. Foster care differs from adoption in that foster care is temporary care. We need foster homes as well as adoptive homes. Presently, the greatest need is for foster families for Black children from age ____ to age _____. If you are interested in foster care, please indicate this on the sign in sheet. There have been some recent changes in foster care, but I will share the basic requirements with you. They are:

1) You must be between 21 and 65 years old.

2) There must be adequate space for placement of a child or children in your home.

3) Your home must pass a health/sanitation inspection and a fire/safety inspection.

4) A medical examination must be completed on all members of the household.

5) You must have adequate income to meet your own needs.

6) You must agree to participate in agency foster parent training.

7) Foster parent licenses must be renewed annually.

For specific information, you may contact _____ at _____.

Are there questions about adoption or foster care?

NOTE: Following the questions, move to film or video presentations. If you are presented with questions that you cannot answer, write down the questions. Inform the party or parties that the foster care or adoption worker will contact them regarding their questions. It is important that the speaker follow through on any situation like this.

After the film, close with the following:

We would like to thank all of you for coming out tonight. Those of you who are interested in adoption or foster care will be contacted by either _____ or _____. Those of you who came because you are interested in working with our Friends of Black Children Council, the next business meeting will be held on _____ at _____. All business meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Good Night.

NOTE: If your local Department of Social Services has group preparation for adoptive applicants, you should indicate when the next group is scheduled to begin before closing.

HANDLING ADOPTION INQUIRIES

It is expected that adoption and foster care inquiries will result from recruitment meetings. It is appropriate for Community Council members to handle these inquiries by referring the prospective parent(s) to the local social service agency.

All requests (whether obtained at a recruitment meeting or by an individual Council member) for adoption by prospective parents should be recorded by the Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson should forward a copy of the referral form (See next page for a sample of the referral form) to the social services agency liaison to the Community Council. The agency liaison is often the adoption worker. However in some instances there will also be another designated agency liaison to the Council, as well. The Vice-Chairperson should maintain a copy for the Community Council file.

Following the referral to the local social services agency, it is important that the Vice-Chairperson follow-up on the status of the referrals to the agency. This can be done through telephone or personal contact with the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the local agency adoption worker or supervisor. In doing this, the Council membership is able to determine their successes, evaluate their progress and to provide support to the prospective parent(s). The Council's support to the prospective adoptive and/or foster parent(s), in many instances, makes the difference as to whether the prospective parent(s) will complete the adoption process.

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN COUNCIL
REFERRAL FOR ADOPTION

CALLER'S NAME(S): _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ Home Telephone: _____

Other number(s) where you can be contacted: _____

Could you make afternoon appointments? _____

Could you make evening appointments? _____

Date: _____

Council Member: _____

CALLER'S NAME(S): _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ Home Telephone: _____

Other number(s) where you can be contacted: _____

Could you make afternoon appointments? _____

Could you make evening appointments? _____

Date: _____

Council Member: _____

Challenges and Problem Solving Recommendations

Challenges

After four months of project implementation, it was apparent that the organization of Community Council had raised many challenges. There were four major concerns regarding the Community Councils.

The first concern involved communication among Council members and agency personnel. In several communities there were conflicting statements of belief among these two groups. For example, in one county, a Council member evaluated Council relations with the agency as "very good." Yet the adoption worker obviously found the relationship strained as she reported that she "dreads" Council meetings. In several counties, agencies and Council members expressed these conflicting views of each other.

Second, Council members needed assistance in defining and carrying out their roles. Community Council members were unanimously enthusiastic about and committed to the goals of the project. Yet, this enthusiasm could not, in all cases, produce the necessary skills to implement ideas or perform tasks such as writing news releases. Council meetings frequently lacked structure, and did not begin or end on time. Some Councils needed more adequate preparation for the recruitment meetings.

Third, by mid-year, it was apparent that Councils needed skills and knowledge which would facilitate their independence and continuation after the project year. Both Black and white agency staff, as well as some Council members, felt that the Community Council would not survive past the project year without training toward independence.

Fourth only one of the four Community Councils appeared to maintain a sizeable and strong membership core. Most Councils needed to shift responsibilities from members who had been unable to follow-through on assignments and to spread responsibilities among a wider number of individuals. In assessing the stability of membership, it was important to distinguish between members who attended business meetings and those who supported activities in their local areas. Both types of members were crucial to the effectiveness of the Councils. Persons who did not attend Council meetings regularly provided vital support and help with recruitment activities.

Problem Solving Recommendations

The midyear assessment of the implementation of the Friends of Black Children model highlighted several issues concerning the relationship between social service agencies and Community Councils. Based on experiences with these issues, project staff offered seven recommendations to Council members for developing positive relations with social service agencies.

1. Recognize the history of mistrust.

Any effort to build trust must first acknowledge and accept the fact that mistrust usually exists. The Black community often perceives the agency as alien and hostile to their concerns. Agency staff often have stereotypes about Black people as individuals and about the Black community. Both groups, the agency and the community, must recognize this history of mistrust and actively begin to chart a course of working together. After all, the community and the agency share the same mission: finding permanent homes for Black children.

2. Open the doors to positive communication.

A second step to building positive relationships with social service agencies is letting the staff know that the Community wants to help. It should be clear beyond a doubt that the goal is to facilitate positive changes, not to chastise or "reform" the agency.

3. Get involved in agency activities.

Community Councils can provide valuable assistance to agencies in many ways. Ways that they may be of assistance are specified in "Community Council Recruitment Activities" on page 82.

4. Involve the agency in your recruitment activities.

Always invite agency staff to attend recruitment activities sponsored by the Community Council. Let the agency know about the activities well in advance to facilitate their planning, the day, time, and place of all meetings.

5. Conduct Council activities in a professional manner.

Begin and end meetings at specified times. Be consistent about meeting times and dates; if your business meetings are the third Wednesday of the month, make every effort to adhere to that schedule.

6. Adopt a learning attitude; realize the agency staff are resource people.

Agency staff have experience and special knowledge in the area of adoption. Openness to learning from them will benefit your efforts.

7. Use positive ways to resolve or negotiate any conflicts which may arise.

When conflicts arise they are best delt with openly, honestly, and quickly. Attending to conflicts at the point that they arise prevents the build up of tensions, and makes the conflicts easier to resolve.

The Community Councils: Descriptions and Accomplishments

To illustrate the strengths and challenges of the Community Councils, each of the four Councils is described. Sample media and recrutiment materials developed by the Councils and Departments of Social Services are presented in Appendix IV.

Community Council A

Characteristics and Profiles of Council Members

The Community Council in County A was composed of persons with grade school to college level education. Occupations included attorneys, a photographer, ministers, a teacher, employees of the local social services agency, and laborers. The average age was forty, and the group was predominantly female. One adoptive parent was involved with the Council on a limited basis. There were no foster parents on this Council.

Stability of Membership

The Council consisted of approximately ten regular members. In addition to executive officers there were area coordinators designated to assist with planning and implementation of Council activities in each of the local townships within the county. The most consistent attendance at meetings came from officers. Attendance by area coordinators and members in this county was less frequent. The attendance at Council meetings ranged from eight to twenty-five person, however a very effective core group materialized.

Relationship with Agency

The agency had some initial reservations about the effectiveness of volunteers in such recruitment efforts. However, the agency liaison was instrumental in facilitating communication between the agency and the Council. The adoption worker attended meetings initially and presented information on adoption for both business and recruitment meetings. The attitudes of Council members toward the agency were positive. They seemed to be comfortable with the adoption worker and contacted her freely to discuss referrals and to obtain updates on referrals.

Development of the Council

None of the officers had previous knowledge about adoption. Agendas for meetings reflected efforts by the Friends of Black Children staff to

educate the Community Council about the adoption process and the status of children locally and statewide. Council members were advised to check with the adoption worker for the names, ages, and needs of waiting children and for the current needs for foster care.

Recruitment Materials and Strategies

Council members were asked to identify Black communities, businesses, social or civic organizations, and churches in their county. These groups were contacted and informed of the goals of the Council. Posters and bumper stickers, provided by the State Division of Social Services, were placed in Black businesses. Friends of Black Children staff was able to provide recruitment films, and videotapes of children waiting to be adopted.

A primary goal of this Community Council was to become visible in the community. Newspaper articles and news releases were frequently used. Radio and television were used whenever possible. An information booth in the town's only shopping mall yielded the best results, with twenty-five persons attending the next recruitment meetings.

The Community Council's efforts to involve the Black churches were not successful. The lack of support was due in part to the fact that most of the area ministers did not live in the county. Better success was achieved by working with the deacons of the local churches who lived in the area. The best results from recruitment efforts tended to occur whenever Council activities centered around some county-wide activity or site, such as the festival in the park and the booth in the mall.

Council officers were provided PALS (Photo Adoption Listing Services) books. They were encouraged to show the books to people in their communities. On occasion, they were loaned to persons considering adoption and used when presentations were made by members of the Council in the community.

Schedule of Community Council Activities

December — First organizational meeting, ten persons attended; three representatives from the social services agency.

January — Second business meeting, fourteen persons attended, election of officers.

February — First recruitment meeting, attendance of twenty-six. Meeting preceded by booth in the local mall, pamphlets and brochures disseminated; televison coverage of display at mall.

March — Business Meeting, attendance of ten; plans were made for the next recruitment meeting.

April — Recruitment meeting was held in a church in a rural township of the county, attendance eight. The minister of the church

was not a resident of County A, but attended Friends of Black Children meetings as often as possible. This church kept a PALS book in its vestibule with posters about adoption. Media coverage was limited to the local newspaper and radio station.

May — Recruitment meeting, attendance of ten.

June — Fourth recruitment meeting was held, ten persons attended. Publicity was conducted through radio and television, public service announcements, newspapers, letters to churches in the area. Attendance limited to members of the church.

July — Business meeting consisting of executive committee. The Friends of Black Children Community Council participated in a festival in the local park and distributed flyers about adoption. Friends of Black Children Community Council members assisted with the video-taping of three brothers who were waiting for an adoptive family.

August — Friends of Black Children Community Council engaged in the following activities: canvassed Black businesses for support, door-to-door canvassing at Black Community College, spoke to a local Black sorority and social club. These activities resulted in the addition of three new members to Community Council. Newspaper, radio, and television public service announcements resulted in six inquiries about foster care and adoption.

September — Representatives from the Friends of Black Children Community Council participated in the Year-End Continuity conference sponsored by the project.

Community Council B

Characteristics and Profiles of Council Members

Educational levels of Council members ranged from high school to college graduates. Occupations included teachers, a mortician, retired couples, ministers, and adoptive and foster parents. The median age was about forty years. The Council was predominantly female.

Stability of Membership

The Council consisted of approximately twelve members. Again, the most consistent attendance came from officers. Area coordinators were more supportive of activities in their area than they were in attending business meetings. Active membership stabilized after the third meeting.

Relationship with Agency

Council members experienced frustration and disappointment with the agency's adoption process. They felt that the process was too lengthy. Attempts to resolve this issue by explaining to the Council that the adoption staff was inadequate to meet the needs on a more timely basis did not result in a satisfactory resolution for the Council membership. The local agency attempted to increase staff through budget requests for additional staff, but to no avail. Based on these concerns, recommendations were made to the agency for modifications in procedures, especially with regard to developing a regular schedule for adoption informational and group preparation meetings.

Development of the Council

The educational level of Council memberships was post-secondary. Most persons involved were well known and active in their communities. However, their knowledge of adoption issues for Black children was limited. They were unaware that the agency policy requiring that mothers not work for two years after adopting had been changed.

Several Council members knew of people who had waited for several years to get an adoption assessment completed, and they were anxious to get the new information out to the community regarding the changes in agency policies and procedures. The first task before the agency and project staff was to convince Council members that families would be responded to differently. Training was provided for Council members regarding their role and information was provided concerning the plight of the Black children throughout the state in need of permanent homes.

Recruitment Materials and Strategies

Strategies for reaching the Black communities were the same as those used by Community Council A. However, a major difference was the lack of television stations in close proximity to this County. Other types of media were used including radio, local newspapers, and mailings to churches announcing recruitment efforts. The informal network seemed to be most effective in this community. Persons who came to meetings indicated most frequently that someone had told them about a recruitment meeting.

Presentations were made to PTAs and a special effort was made to involve community churches through the ministerial alliance. The efforts with the alliance were not particularly fruitful due to the large number of ministers living outside of the county.

Schedule of Community Council Activities

January First organizational meeting, officers elected, attendance of ten.

February	First recruitment meeting, attendance of fifteen persons. Publicity used included the newspaper, public service announcements, and letters to individuals in the Black community.
March	Business meeting to plan for public awareness activities. The Friends of Black Children Community Council presented information to the local PTA at the junior high school and to the local ministerial alliance, and placed an announcement in one of the local school papers.
April	Recruitment meeting was held by the Community Council, attendance of eight. Preceeding the recruitment meeting the Council sponsored a booth at the local mall, public service announcements and newspaper articles.
May	Business meeting and recruitment meeting were conducted; attendance fourteen persons. Live program on local radio station.
June	Two recruitment meetings were held, attendance ten and eight, respectively.
July	Recruitment meeting held. Seventeen persons in attendance.
August	No activity.
September	Participation in the Year-End Continuity Conference.

Community Council C

Characteristics and Profiles of Council Members

The Community Council was composed of persons with high school to college levels of education. Occupations included ministers, factory workers, a lawyer, social workers, retired persons, a police officer, and homemakers. There were adoptive parents on this Council. The median age was forty.

Stability of Membership

The Community Council consisted of approximately fifteen members. Again, the most consistent participation came from those persons in elected offices or serving as area coordinators.

Relationship with Agency

The agency initially expressed some concern about the use of volunteers. Most of these concerns were based on previous experiences with volunteer groups. However, later the agency took the initiative to

contact Council members about recruitment agendas and volunteered staff to work with the Community Council on recruitment efforts.

The agency provided posters and brochures to the Council. Council members worked with the agency to prepare videotapes of children who were waiting and adoptive parents. The agency also assisted with transportation for Council members to one of the workshops and the Year-End Conference, sponsored by the project. All of these efforts tended to facilitate a sense of mutual appreciation between the agency and the Community Council.

Development of the Council

After learning about alternative methods for working with prospective adoptive families, Council members began to question the agency's procedures. The initial response from agency staff was defensive. However, because the adoption supervisor was present at the Community Council meetings, she was able to suggest an alternative that was satisfactory to the Council. This situation highlighted the importance of having an agency representative at Council meetings. Serious problems were avoided because the adoption supervisor was available to address questions as they arose.

Recruitment Materials and Strategies

The agency developed brochures and posters. Videotapes made by the agency were made available to Council members for their use in recruitment meetings. Friends of Black Children staff also made films, posters, and bumper stickers available to the Community Council.

The Community Council decided to hold business meetings and recruitment meetings bi-monthly. Business meetings were held consistently in the same location, and recruitment meetings were rotated throughout the county. A Speakers Bureau was established. Presentations were made at churches and at meetings of other organizations in the county.

Schedule of Community Council Activities

December	First organizational meeting was held; approximately twenty-five people were in attendance.
January	Business meeting was held, attendance of twelve persons. Officers were elected.
February	Recruitment meeting was held. Approximately fifteen persons attended. Preceding the meeting publicity was done through the local newspapers and public service announcements.
March	Business meeting was held. Ten persons attended.
April	Recruitment meeting was held. Six persons attended.

May	Recruitment meeting held, attendance of eight. Participated in a workshop entitled "Facilitating the Adoption of Black Children" which was co-sponsored by the Friends of Black Children project and a local Black adoption support group.
June	Business meeting held, attendance eight. Booth at mall; presentation to NAACP and a Black professional group.
July	Recruitment meeting held, attendance of fifteen. Publicity through newspaper and public service announcements.
August	Business meeting held, attendance of five. Publicity on radio and in the newspaper. Made plans for incorporation as a non-profit organization.
September	Participated in the Year-End Continuity conference sponsored by the project.

Community Council D

Characteristics and Profiles of Council Members

The Community Council was composed of persons with various educational attainments ranging from grade school to college graduates. Occupations included ministers, a computer analyst, a librarian, a social worker, professionals in the field of mental health, a transportation aide, homemakers, domestics, and retired persons. Ages of Council members ranged from twenty years to over sixty-five. The median age was forty. Membership was predominantly female. A foster parent and adoptive parents were involved in the work of the Community Council.

Stability of Membership

The Council consisted of approximatley fifteen members. The most consistent attendance at meetings came from officers. Area coordinators most frequently supported efforts in their communities.

Relationship with Agency

The Chairperson for the Community Council was well known to the agency. He was an adoptive parent and had previously participated in the agency's group preparation of adoptive parents.

From the beginning, the adoption supervisor and worker attended meetings of the Council. They were available to answer questions. Agency staff were available initially to assist Council members in interviews with local newspapers, television, and radio stations.

Development of the Council

Initially, project staff contacted area newspapers and radio and television stations to announce the efforts of the Council. Interviews were arranged by project staff, but Council members actively participated in interviews and tapings. This Community Council was quickly able to assume its independence from the project staff. The development of Council independence contributed to its viability and stability.

Many activities were sponsored by this Community Council. A Speakers Bureau was established and became active. Presentations were made in area churches and before local organizations. The Chairperson was able to conduct recruitment meeting using the information on conducting recruitment meetings presented on pages 85 - 93.

Business meetings were used to clarify roles of the Council, to plan and evaluate activities and to provide training for Council members. On-going training about adoption and foster care was essential for expanding the knowledge of Council members. This information was shared repeatedly to ease the anxieties of Council members who were unfamiliar with this information.

The Community Council held bi-monthly business meetings on alternating months with recruitment meetings. However, rotating bi-monthly business meetings created some difficulties in communication among Community Council membership between meetings.

Recruitment Materials and Strategies

The State Division of Social Services provided posters and bumper stickers to the Council. Area coordinators were provided with PALS Books to show in their communities and at recruitment meetings. Prior to the project the local social services agency was holding bi-monthly informational meetings in a centrally located local church for all persons interested in adoption or foster care. The Community Council began to hold recruitment meetings on the alternating months with those already being held by the social services agency thereby making it possible for citizens in this county to have information available on a monthly basis.

The information/recruitment meetings provided by the Council differed from the meetings sponsored by the agency in that they were held in the Black community. This Council used settings such as libraries, community action facilities, and churches.

Schedule of Community Council Activities

December First organizational meeting, attendance of fifteen persons. Officers were elected. The local county agency director, adoption supervisor and adoption worker were present for this meeting. The meeting was chaired by Friends of Black Children and Department of Social Services staff.

January	Business meeting was held. Plans were made for the recruitment meetings to be sponsored by the Friends of Black Children Community Council.
February	First recruitment meeting was held. Twenty-five persons attended.
March	Business meeting held. A four-part series was taped and aired on a local radio station. A live radio show was done by the Community Council with the assistance of Friends of Black Children and the social services agency staff.
April	Recruitment meeting was held, attendance of twenty-five. Display booth at the local shopping mall.
May	Business meeting held. Members of this Council participated in a workshop co-sponsored by Friends of Black Children and a local Black Adoptions group.
June	Recruitment meeting held, attendance of ten persons. Members of this Council participated in the regional meeting of the state Social Services Association.
July	Business meeting held. The Friends of Black Children Community Council co-sponsored a picnic at a local orphanage with the Association of Black Social Workers.
August	Business meeting was held, attendance of twelve. Two presentations were made to community groups by the Speakers Bureau. Made plans for incorporation, obtained a post office box and held a social for members of the Community Council.
September	Participated in the Year-end Continuity Conference sponsored by Friends of Black Children Project.

Moving Toward Independence

During the demonstration project year, Community Councils received considerable support and technical assistance from the Friends of Black Children Project staff. All expenses related to the functioning of the Community Councils were paid for by the project. However, community volunteers contributed fully of their time and energy and paid for their travel expenses to and from all meetings.

At the end of one year, it was intended that Councils would be sufficiently strong and skilled to continue their activities with minimal assistance from the Friends of Black Children staff. An important goal of the project was to foster the independence of the Councils, thereby enabling them to become equal partners with agencies in recruitment efforts.

For example, the project staff initially provided technical assistance to the Councils with mailings for their monthly meetings and with public service announcements. However, this responsibility was assumed by the Council secretaries as soon as possible. Council secretaries were trained to write routine news releases for local newspapers before and after meetings and recruitment activities. The secretaries also assumed responsibility for recording minutes of the business sessions. Each Council established an annual calendar for project year activities. A minimum of weekly contact was maintained by project staff with the presiding officers and Area Co-ordinators. Agendas for the informational meetings were planned initially by both the Council and the agency liaisons to the Councils. The presiding Council officers and the agency liaisons assumed responsibility for the program at the monthly informational meetings.

The independent functioning of Council members at the end of one year was a project goal. Moving toward independence required that two major tasks be accomplished: (1) that Councils become incorporated and (2) that Community Council members could secure funds and plan an annual budgets. Each of these two aspects of moving toward independence is described below.

Becoming Incorporated and Developing Bylaws

Friends of Black Children staff assisted Community Council members in becoming incorporated and developing bylaws. The procedure for Incorporation varies from state to state. General instructions for becoming incorporated, a model for incorporatation and a sample format for Bylaws in the state of North Carolina are described on the following pages. It was suggested that Councils attempt to attain legal assistance

by requesting the volunteer services of a friendly attorney, and that one of the most effective ways to obtain these services would be to see that an attorney was a member of the Community Council. This was the situation with one of the Council's established during the project year.

One of the four Councils began the process of incorporating as a non-profit organization during the project year. One had completed incorporation by the end of the project year.

OVERVIEW OF NON-PROFIT INCORPORATION *

In a very general way, the following is what is involved in setting up a nonprofit corporation:

(1) Filing Fee

(2) State will want to know:

(a) Name of corporation

(b) Purpose of corporation (what it does)

(c) Names and addresses of persons starting the corporation (called incorporators)

(d) Who the officers and directors of the corporation are

(e) Corporate address (office)

(f) Who to contact for legal and official purposes (called a registered agent)

The above information may be typed on plain bond stationery.

(3) Send the right number of copies, with the right number of signatures along with filing fee(s), to the right state offices.

(4) Hold an organizational meeting of members to elect the first permanent Board of Directors, who will then elect the first officers, and adopt By-laws (rules of how the corporation is operated).

(5) Keep minutes (record of who is elected, what is decided) of meetings and keep books (records of all financial expenditures).

(6) Most states require an annual report to reaffirm the existence of the corporation and collect an annual fee (normally under $10), but this will normally be done on forms that the Secretary of State sends to the registered agent. At the time you incorporate, you should see what is required in your state.

(7) For any questions that are not covered by this memo, check with your state officials. To do this, simply telephone information in your state capitol, ask for the Secretary of State's Office and explain your questions to whoever answers the telephone at the Secretary of State's Office. You may get switched around to three or four different people before you finally get the one who can answer your questions, but persevere.

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* Prepared by Region IV Adoption Resource Center, Chapel Hill, N.C., January, 1980.

NON-PROFIT INCORPORATION
REQUIREMENTS COMMON TO ALL STATES *

The corporation must be nonprofit. To be nonprofit, no stock may be issued, and no dividends may be paid to members. In a nonprofit corporation, the participants are called members and not stockholders. You can establish dues for members to belong, and membership requirements.

All members have one vote each in membership meetings. Except under unusual circumstances, the members only vote to elect directors, and the elected directors elect the officers and establish the policy and direction of the corporation. In electing directors, many states allow each member to have as many votes as there are directors to be elected, with each member casting one vote per the candidates if his choice. Before doing this, you should check on what is allowed in your state.

There must be at least three directors who are eligible to vote. To make things simple, each director should serve one year, subject to being reelected, or new directors elected, at each annual members meeting.

There must be at least two officers, a President and a Secretary, who cannot be the same person. There may be as many Vice-Presidents as desired. For simplicity's sake, have an odd number of officers and make the Secretary a Secretary/Treasurer.

To avoid potential problems, both the President and the Secretary/Treasurer should sign all checks. Start a new corporate account in a local bank that requires both of these signatures.

The officers should be elected or reelected once a year.

No loans can be made from corporate funds to any officers or directors.

The Secretary/Treasurer must keep 'minutes' of all meetings and 'books' of all financial transactions. To make things easier, you may wish the Secretary/Treasurer to be authorized by the Board to go the local stationery store and buy a corporation kit. This will include sheets for minutes, places for Bylaws and Corporate Charter, perhaps a Corporate Seal, etc. Ignore the 'stock' certificates, if any, as you will not issue 'stock'. The Secretary/Treasurer must keep a current list of all valid members. All corporate records and documents should be kept together, in a safe place. If you wish to be fancy, you may issue 'Certificates of Membership' to qualified member on a yearly basis.

Generally, your corporate name cannot be the same as any other corporation in your state. You may have to try several times before finally coming up with a corporate name that is unique to you, so be original. You may not, of course, use a corporate name that includes improper language, or suggests that you are a government entity, or would be misleading to your purpose. Always use the initials 'Inc.' after the corporate name.

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* Ibid.

SAMPLE FORM FOR ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION *

INSTRUCTIONS: Retype on your bond or stationery, filling in the blanks appropriately and choosing between the word or group of words preceding the italicized word or group of italicized words wherever they appear.

(CHARTER) ARTICLES OF INCORPORTATION

OF

_____

The undersigned, being of the age of _____ or more, do(does) hereby make and acknowledge this(these) (Charter)Articles of Incorporation for the purpose of forming a nonprofit corporation under and by virtue of the laws of the State of _____:

1. The name of the corporation is _____, Inc.

2. The period of duration of the corporation is perpetual.

3. This corporation is to be a nonprofit corporation, and will issue neither stock nor dividends.

4. The purpose for which the corporation is organized are:

   (a) To collect and disseminate information about adoption and foster care of American children, particularly those with special needs, and to increase public awareness and education of the same;

   (b) To aid adoptive parent members, prospective adoptive parent members, and other interested persons by providing counseling and other types of information and education support from the corporate members and the corporation; and

   (c) To engage in any lawful act or activity for which nonprofit corporations may be organized under the laws of the State of _____.

5. The address of the initial registered office of the corporation in the State of _____ is _____ _____(make sure you put mailing as well as location address, and County); and the name of its initial registered agent is _____, whose address is _____.

* Ibid.

6. The number of directors constituting the initial board of directors shall be three (3); and the names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as directors until the first meeting of members, or until their successors be elected and qualify, are:

NAME	ADDRESS

All subsequent Directors will be elected by the members in the annual meeting.

7. The name and address of the incorporator(s) is(are):

NAME	ADDRESS

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this _____day of_____, 19___.

_____

STATE OF _____

COUNTY OF _____

I, _____, a notary public, do hereby certify that _____and _____ personally appeared before me this _____day of _____, 19___ and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing Articles of Incorporation.

_____
Notary Public

My Commission expires:_____

*Check the above notary statement with your local notary public to make sure that it is in the right form and worded to reflect the requirements of your state.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. NAME:

1. The name of this organization is County A Friends of Black Children Community Council.

B. PURPOSE:

1. To collect and disseminate information about adoption and foster care of Black children, particularly those with special needs, and to increase public awareness and education of the same;

2. To aid adoptive parent members, and prospective adoptive parent members, and other interested persons by providing counseling, other types of information and educational support from the corporate members and the corporation; and

4. To engage in any lawful act or activity for which nonprofit corporations may be organized under the laws of the State _____.

ARTICLE II - DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

A. DIRECTORS: There will be four members on the Board of Directors who will be elected by a majority of the general membership present at the annual meeting. The Directors will elect the officers in a Board of Directors meeting immediately following their election at the annual meeting. The Directors will serve one year terms, and may succeed themselves. Any vacancies occuring on the Board of Directors between annual meetings will be filled by majority vote of the remaining Directors present in a Board meeting. A Director may also be an officer.

B. CHAIRPERSON: The Chairperson will arrange, coordinate and preside at all meetings of the general membership or the Officers. The Chairperson will oversee all aspects of the internal operation of the organization, and must co-sign all checks or disbursements with the Secretary/Treasurer. The Chairperson will serve a one year term, and may succeed himself/herself.

C. VICE CHAIRPERSON: The Vice-Chairperson will be responsible for performing the duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is unable to do so. The Vice-Chairperson will also be responsible for all publicity activities of the organization in consultation with the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson will serve a one year term and may succeed himself/herself.

D. SECRETARY: The Secretary will be responsible for the minutes of the meetings of the Officers and general membership, and will be responsible for all records related to the internal operation of the organization. This will include but not be limited to a current listing of the membership, give notice to members of meetings to be held, keep an attendance record for all meetings, and perform such other duties as the Chairperson may direct. The Secretary will serve a term of one year and may succeed herself/himself.

E. TREASURER: The Treasurer will be responsible for the collection and disbursement (co-signing all checks with the Chairperson) of all funds of the organization, application for funds available through government agencies, the payment of bills for the organization and disbursement of funds as approved by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer will also serve as Vice-Secretary. The Treasurer will serve a term of one year and may succeed herself/himself.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: The General Membership will consist of those persons who are interested in the welfare of Black children generally or who are interested in adoption and foster care specifically. To qualify for membership a person must attend two consecutive meetings and be willing to work on behalf of Black children. Each general member shall have one vote at the annual meeting or other such meetings as may be called from time to time by the Chairperson, Board of Directors, or a majority of the membership.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

A. ANNUAL MEETINGS: The annual meeting will be held _____. The Board of Directors and Officers will be elected at the annual meeting and will be installed during the first meeting after the annual meeting.

B. OTHER MEETINGS: Business and Informational meetings will be held once a month and from time to time respectively with the appropriate notice and may be called by the Chairperson, Board of Directors, or a majority of membership.

ARTICLE V - STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees shall include but not be limited to:

A. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Responsible for:

i. Recruiting new members
ii. Follow-up on inactive members and reinviting them to be active.

B. FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Responsible for planning and coordinating all fundraising activities of the organization.

ARTICLE VI - DUES

There shall be no fixed dues. Operational costs shall be maintained through fundraising activities and individual contributions.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by the Board of Directors in a Board meeting provided however that Directors will have received a copy of the proposed amendment concurrently with the notice of the Board meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - QUORUM

No decisions or changes shall be made without two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors and without majority vote of the membership.

Fundraising and Annual Budgets

The Friends of Black Children staff assisted Community Councils with preparation of annual budgets and fundraising.

Councils were asked to estimate their annual costs. From this estimate, an average expected operating budget was composed. The following is a sample Annual Estimated Operating Budget:

Postage:	(Based on 50 letters per month and 50 postcards per month)	$ 198.00
Printing:	Paper with letterhead/logo, 500 sheets	23.50
	Envelopes #10 weave, 500	37.95
	Brochures, per 1000	60.00
Posters:	(provided by agency/project)	0
Post Office Box		15.00
* Total		$ 334.45

* This estimate is based on quotes from various businesses, so these costs will vary.

In order to have the money to operate, fundraising was essential. Community Council members were provided with a handout, "Fundraising Can Be Fun," which described a variety of fundraising strategies. (See Appendix I.) Council members were advised to consider approaching Black businesses regarding their needs for services and materials. It was hoped that these business people would give discounts and might become new members of the Council. Businesses were usually responsive to Community Council efforts. Local fraternal and social organizations were valuable resources as well. Overall, we urged Council members to: PROMOTE YOUR EFFORTS!

A Final Word

As illustrated by the descriptions of the four Community Councils, each community set its own goals and strategies based on its interests and needs. Community volunteers became aware that their creativity, imagination, and energy were the primary tools needed to design a plan to help Black children.

In all four Community Councils, a pattern of accomplishments can be seen:

* Three out of four project counties provided the first direct outreach to the Black community by holding informational-recruitment meetings about adoption in the communities.

* Councils were responsible for increases in adoption and foster home inquiries in all counties.

* Speakers Bureaus were established in all of the project counties.

* Councils increased community awareness through television, radio and newspaper coverage of their activities, shopping mall booths, and contact with Black businesses and organizations.

The experiences of these four Community Council demonstrate that Black community involvement can be an effective support system for the adoption of Black children.

SECTION IV

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Overview

Early formation of the Advisory Committee was a goal of the project. The nucleus of this group reflected the same composition as the four local county Community Councils and social service agencies. It was a broadly representative group of twenty persons in key leadership positions in public and private agencies, citizens and professional organizations, and the medical, business, legal and legislative arenas. In composing the Committee, emphasis was placed on the group's ability to facilitate the dissemination and replication of the project beyond the twelve month grant period. For this reason the directors (or their designees) of the four project county social service agencies were members of the Advisory Committee. In addition, the State Division of Social Services was asked to designate a member. Selected personnel from the project counties, including Community Council members, were asked to participate periodically to report on the progress of their activities. The Committee held quarterly meetings of one to two days in length and communicated by mail and telephone between meetings. (See the following pages for copies of letters of invitation and of acceptance.)

The project Advisory Committee worked on behalf of the project to provide leadership, consultation, and technical assistance to the project staff in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the five project objectives. This Committee served as a communication mechanism to a wide range of resources to gain support for improved adoption services to Black children. It served as a means of acquainting the larger community with the realities of the child welfare system. It also provided advocacy for increased moral responsibility and for needed financial, legal, and legislative changes.

The advice and assistance of the Advisory Committee members who had had similar experiences was a valuable resource. For example, the Executive Director of the North Carolina Governor's Advocacy Council on Children and Youth had served for three years as a member of the North Carolina Coalition for Foster Children, a group initially formed by Group Child Care Consultant Services in a national demonstration project to develop leadership support for permanency planning. Additionally, a Committee member from The Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Inc., the only private, statewide, non-sectarian adoption agency in the state, had had successful experiences in various recruitment efforts in the Black community and offered their assistance. The directors of the social service agencies also accepted membership on the Advisory Committee and offered valuable insights.

Initial leadership training was provided to the Advisory Committee by the Principal Investigator, project staff, and consultants who assisted

the Committee in gaining broad knowledge of issues in adoption services to Black children and families, in defining their role in relation to project goals, and in exploring strategy options. The focus of the work with the Advisory Committee was on building a stable, active, knowledgeable, cohesive, and effective mechanism which would serve an enabling function on behalf of vulnerable children in the state.

To provide an overview of the Advisory Committee, agendas and minutes of each of the four meetings are presented.

SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT
CHAPEL HILL

Group Child Care Consultant Services
School of Social Work
919-966-5466

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
312 Finley Rd. 493-A
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

July 19, 1982

Mr. John Niblock, Executive Director
Governor's Advocacy Council
on Children And Youth
112 West Lane Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27608

Dear John:

The Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill has been selected by the Children's Bureau to submit a full non-competitive proposal to demonstrate the task force concept of collaborative work between state agencies, local agencies and the Black community. This demonstration project is a response to the continuing need to locate permanent adoptive families for Black children in North Carolina.

We are writing to request your support of this project and to elicit your willingness to serve as a member of the Project's Advisory Committee. Your support of the project and the acceptance of Advisory Committee membership are critical to the implementation of this project of national interest. The committee will guide in the planning process and advise in the development of strategies to achieve the projects's objectives. The committee will play an essential role in the Project's efforts to gain widespread support for the dissemination and replication of this project throughout all 100 counties in North Carolina. If you are unable to serve on the Advisory Committee, we welcome your suggestion of an alternate to represent your group.

Departments of Social Services are experiencing the harsh realities of staff reductions and budget constraints. Yet, there remain large numbers of Black children in the foster care system awaiting permanent adoptive families. In North Carolina more than half (57%) of children listed with the Photo Adoption Listing Services (PALS), and thus identified as awaiting adoptive families, are Black. The percentage of Black children awaiting families is more than double the corresponding percentage of Blacks in the general population of the state (22%), confirming national statistics that Black children are less likely to achieve permanent adoptive placement after entry into foster care. This project offers an opportunity to develop new and different means for correcting this critical problem. It involves a systematic approach for involving Black citizens and grass root organizations in both recognizing the real needs and bringing to bear upon the problems important resources to support the efforts of the social service agencies.

The demonstration project poses specific action plans in each of the four selected project sites with emphasis on community education and recruitment. During the project year, through October, 1983, the project staff, the local agency liaison and interested community leaders will plan and implement goals according to their community's particular needs. In each site, a task force will be established to act as a volunteer extension of the agency to provide on-going outreach for finding homes for Black children.

The comparative high incidence of Black children awaiting adoption is a national issue. The project plan calls for the development of a guidebook documenting the process and effective strategies employed in this North Carolina demonstration effort. This guidebook will be available for dissemination in North Carolina and nationally.

We look forward to receiving your letter by July 30, 1982. If you should have questions you may call Ms. Helen Berry, Proposed Project Director, 966-2646. We anticipate that you will join us in this effort to increase the permanent adoptive placement of Black children in North Carolina. When we are notified that the demonstration project has received funding, you will immediately be provided with additional information.

Enclosed for your review is a summary of the concept paper submitted to the Children's Bureau.

Sincerely,

Clifford W. Sanford

Clifford W. Sanford, Executive Director
Group Child Care Consultant Services

Helen J. Berry

Helen J. Berry, MSW
Proposed Project Director

CWS/emb

SAMPLE LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Medical Center Fayetteville NC 28301

Veterans Administration

August 11, 1982

In Reply Refer To: 565/122

Ms. Helen Berry, MSW
Program Specialist
University of North Carolina - Group
Child Care Consultant Services
School of Social Work
300 Battle Hall 056A
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Dear Helen:

I accept with pleasure your invitation to serve as a member of the "Friends of Black Children" Advisory Committee.

Increasing the permanent adoptive placement of Black Children in North Carolina is crucial for those Black Children who have been removed from their biological families, with little hope of ever returning. This cannot be accomplished without outreach by local and state agencies into the Black Community.

The "Friends of Black Children" project is needed throughout North Carolina to facilitate this outreach.

I look forward to working with you and the Advisory Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me for whatever assistance you might need.

Sincerely,

Marti

MARTI PRYOR-COOK, ACSW
Social Work Service

First Advisory Committee Meeting
November 29-30, 1982

Agenda

NOVEMBER 29, 1982

12:00 - 1:00	Registration, lunch
1:00 - 1:30	Welcome - Clifford W. Sanford, Executive Director Group Child Care Consultant Services Introduction - Helen J. Berry, Project Director
1:30 - 3:00	THE WORLD OF ADOPTION TODAY Ms. Darnell Baptiste, Headstart Director, Darlington, S.C., formerly with the Region IV Adoption Resource Center, Chapel Hill, N.C.
3:00 - 3:15	Break
3:15 - 5:00	THE STATUS OF ADOPTION/FOSTER CARE SERVICES FOR BLACK CHILDREN IN NORTH CAROLINA Ms. Sue Glasby, Head, Children Services Branch Ms. Wanda Reives, Permanency Planning Specialist
5:00 - 6:00	Social Hour
6:00 - 7:00	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00	ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE ADOPTION OF BLACK CHILDREN Dr. John B. Turner, William R. Kenan Professor and Dean, School of Social Work, UNC-Chapel Hill

NOVEMBER 30, 1982

7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 - 10:30	Project Goals and The Role of the Advisory Committee
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 - 12:00	Election of Officers for the Advisory Committee, Plan for next Advisory Committee Meeting
12:00	Lunch Adjourn

Summary of First Meeting, November 1982

The first meeting of the Committee was held at a conference center over two days in order to help the group relax, get acquainted, and focus together on the tasks ahead. Orientation to "the world of adoption," specifically in relation to Black children in North Carolina, was the central theme for this first meeting. Through review of statistical data, presentations by knowledgeable persons, and group discussion, Committee members became familiar with the critical nature of the problems in the area of adoption of Black children. The responsibilities of the state and local county Departments of Social Services, and the essential role of the Black community, were examined. A key presenter at the meeting made the following points:

- The Black community must be involved in any solutions or corrective action on behalf of Black children and must be helped to develop a sense that "these are our children."

- Agencies must be able to admit that they don't know the solutions, to seek assistance from the Black community, and to be a resource to the Black community.

- Agencies need to help the Black community learn what their resources are, to assist the community to increase their awareness of the problem and its consequences, and to engage community members in helping to solve it.

- The agencies and the Black community need to work together on a single mission objective to improve adoption services for Black children.

The consideration of issues and alternatives in adoption services for Black children resulted in a collective commitment on the part of the Advisory Committee to take action through the Friends of Black Children project to alleviate or reduce the problems for Black children in need of adoption.

The Committee decided to broaden the representation on the Committee in order to increase the awareness of persons in positions to influence both policy-making and the replication of the project in other counties in the state. In addition, officers were elected, the meeting schedule for the year was determined, the process for developing agenda was agreed upon, and the project's goals and objectives were reviewed and discussed. Through these actions, the Committee at this first meeting took hold of the responsibility as well as the opportunity inherent in the Committee to impact on the future for Black children in the state.

Second Advisory Committee Meeting
February 7-8, 1983

Agenda

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1983

12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:30	Welcome - Dr. Woodrow Nichols, Chairperson, Advisory Committee
1:30 - 3:00	HOW CHILDREN ENTER THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM Ms. Marti Prior-Cook, Committee Member, and former Permanency Planning Specialist
	ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES Mr. Daniel Hudgins, Committee Member, and Department of Social Services Director from a non-pilot county
3:00 - 3:30	Break
3:30 - 5:00	WHO ARE THE CHILDREN? - A STATUS REPORT Ms. Wanda Reives, Permanency Planning Specialist
5:00 - 6:00	Social Hour
6:00 - 7:00	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00	MEETING THE PERMANENCY NEEDS OF BLACK CHILDREN Dr. Sarah T. Morrow, Secretary North Carolina Department of Human Resources

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1983

7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 - 10:30	PROJECT DIRECTOR'S REPORT
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 12:00	DISSEMINATION AND REPLICATION PLANNING John Niblock, Executive Director, Governor's Advocacy Council on Children and Youth
	Agenda for Next Meeting
12:00	Lunch, Adjourn

Summary of Second Meeting, February 1983

The second meeting, planned by the officers of the Advisory Committee, provided opportunities for Committee members to learn more about the adoption situation for Black children, to influence policy-making, and to plan toward the dissemination and replication of the project throughout the state. As in the first meeting, and the meetings which followed, this gathering was held at a conference center from noon of the first day through noon of the second day, a setting and schedule which greatly enhanced the Committee's productive work.

A presentation on "How Children Enter the Child Welfare System" acquainted members with the concepts of a continuum of services and permanency planning, with terminology peculiar to the field, with processes in the child welfare services, and with statistics on the experiences of Black children in the child welfare system. The system's lack of sensitivity and responsiveness to the particular needs of Black families and children was noted and discussed.

A second presentation was made on "Allocation of Resources," during which the funding sources for child welfare services were explained in some detail. Committee members learned about the Federal/State/county partnership in the support and administration of social services programs including child welfare, and about the important policy-making roles of the state's Social Services Commission and county Social Services Boards.

The status report on Black children began, with this second meeting, to be a regular Advisory Committee agenda item. A member of the State Division of Social Services distributed and explained a handout providing up-to-date statistical information on Black children in foster care placement. Specific issues noted included the facts that long-term foster care is more frequently used as the permanent plan for Black children than for white children and that the average length of foster care for Black children is one year longer than for white children.

A highlight of the meeting was to have been a presentation by the Secretary of the State Department of Human Resources. However, because the Secretary had recently been in an accident, the written presentation was delivered by the Assistant Secretary for Inter-Departmental Affairs. The Secretary's remarks noted new developments in adoption services in the state and the commitments of the Department of Human Resources in this area. Committee members were disappointed both by the inability of the Secretary to attend the meeting herself and also by the fact that the presentation did not provide evidence of specific actions being undertaken to address the particular needs of Black children in foster care. Plans were made to invite the Secretary to meet with the Committee at its third meeting.

The increase in Committee members' consciousness and knowledge was clearly evident at the second meeting of the Committee. Discussion covered such diverse subjects as: reallocation of scarce resources, the

concept of the "unadoptable child," possible methods for engaging members of the Black Caucus of the General Assembly in meeting the medical needs of children, and successful strategies for recruiting Black adoptive families. In addition, a Dissemination Sub-Committee was formed to explore further various issues related to replication of the project's model throughout the state, including state-wide publicity, presentations to such groups as the Social Services Commission, and careful measurement of the processes and outcomes of the project.

Third Advisory Committe Meeting
May 18-19, 1983

Agenda

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1983

12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:15	Welcome - Ms. Chrystal Harris, Co-Chairperson, Advisory Committee
1:15- 2:15	STATUS REPORT ON THE CHILDREN: AN UPDATE Ms. Sylvia Stikeleather, Foster Care Co-ordinator
2:15 - 2:30	Break
2:30 - 5:00	Panel Discussion WHAT WORKS WELL WITH BLACK FAMILIES AND WHAT DOESN'T WORK? Adoptive Parents and Social Workers
5:00 - 6:00	Social Hour
6:00 - 7:00	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00	RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A POTPOURRI Helen J. Berry, Project Director Film on Friends of Black Children Project Video tapes from Project County Pre/Post Test Discussion

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1983

7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 - 10:00	A REPORT FROM THE DISSEMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE Public Service Announcement Preview Chrystal Harris, Co-Chairperson
10:00 - 10:30	Break and Check-Out
10:30 - 11:30	PROJECT DIRECTOR'S REPORT
11:30 - 12:00	Agenda Planning for the Next Meeting
12:00	Lunch, Adjourn

Summary of Third Meeting, May 1983

A major focus of the third Committee meeting was consideration of practices and strategies in working with Black families in adoption. A panel composed of adoptive parents and social workers from public and private agencies addressed the question "what works well with Black families and what doesn't work well?" Committee members and panelists shared experiences and perspectives on such topics as:

- the value of support groups for applicants going through the adoption process;
- the importance of word of mouth for applicants to learn what to expect from the agency;
- the benefits of the group preparation process in minimizing the pressure applicants feel to "please the social worker;"
- the difficulty of long waiting periods;
- the anxiety produced for applicants in writing a "life history" to be assessed by persons with considerably more education;
- the fact that the race of the worker is less important than the quality of the relationship between the applicant and the worker;
- the major effect on both adoptive parents and children of a change in social worker;
- the importance of agencies being flexible and trusting, and of their understanding that the power of the agency can sometimes feel overwhelming to parents.

Video-tapes and other media presentations related to adoption of Black children were previewed at this meeting. The media presentations included video-tapes of children in need of adoptive homes used in recruitment by one of the pilot counties and a local television program on the Friends of Black Children project. The Committee made plans for the development of public service announcements and reviewed a draft of an information brochure, both to be used as part of a statewide information dissemination campaign planned by the Dissemination Sub-Committee. An updated status report on Black children in foster care was presented and discussed. A Policy, Practice and Administration Sub-Committee was formed to develop recommendations for improvements to overcome barriers experienced by Black adoptive parent applicants. In addition, the Committee heard a report of a successful meeting held by several Committee members with the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources to request funding for continuation work in additional counties in the coming year.

Fourth Advisory Committee Meeting
August 15-16, 1983

Agenda

MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 1983

12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:15	Welcome - Dr. Woodrow Nichols, Chairperson
1:15 - 2:45	PERMANENCY PLANNING: THEN AND NOW Ms. Sylvia Stikeleather, Foster Care Co-ordinator STATUS REPORT ON THE CHILDREN: AN UPDATE Ms. Wanda Reives, Permanency Planning Specialist
2:45 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 3:30	POLICY, PRACTICE, ADMINISTRATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT Mr. Buddy Streit, Committee Member
3:30 - 5:00	NORTH CAROLINS'S RESPONSE TO BLACK CHILDREN IN NEED OF ADOPTION Mr. John Syria, Director, Division of Social Services
5:00 - 6:00	Social Hour
6:00 - 7:00	Dinner
7:00 - 9:00	PROJECT EVALUATION Dr. Carl Henley, Project Evaluation Consultant PROJECT GUIDEBOOK Dr. Valora Washington, Guidebook Consultant

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1983

7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	DISSEMINATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT Ms. Chrystal Harris, Co-Chairperson
9:00 - 10:00	PROJECT DIRECTOR'S REPORT
10:00 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 12:00	WHAT'S NEXT? A LOOK TO THE FUTURE Dr. Woodrow Nichols and All
12:00	Lunch, Adjourn

Summary of Fourth Meeting, August 1983

At the fourth quarterly meeting of the Advisory Committee, attention continued to be given to statewide issues, policies, and needs related to adoption services for Black children and families. Although the funding period for the project was officially drawing to a close, this meeting was by no means a "final" meeting of the group, due both the group's commitment to continued action and the state's agreement to provide support for project continuation and expansion.

Learning opportunities in this meeting included a presentation from a state agency staff member on permanency planning and the state's child welfare management information and tracking system. The historical development of permanency planning and progress made on behalf of children were described and documented statistically, and the tracking system was discussed at length. The data clearly show that (1) Black children are staying longer in foster care than white children and leave the system more slowly, (2) more Black children are available for adoption than white children, and (3) fewer Black families than white families are available as placement resources.

The Policy, Practice, and Administration Sub-Committee reported on their work in looking at barriers to the adoptive placement of Black children in foster care and making recommendations for change. The Sub-Committee had considered several areas, including: (1) how the supply of homes has been affected by recruitment, by initial follow-up to applicants, and by the discouragement of foster parent adoption; (2) the approval of homes; and (3) the advertising of homes once they are approved. Concerns were expressed about inadequate public awareness of the need for homes, inadequate follow-up when potential applicants had made their interest known, the length of time involved in the home study process, the difficulty in negotiating between and among counties regarding available approved home studies, and inappropriate staff values. A variety of strategies for reducing the effect of these barriers were discussed:

- conducting a coordinated continuing public relations program to increase public awareness,
- publicizing agency guidelines for accepting applications,
- improving mechanisms for exchanging approved home studies between counties,
- increasing utilization of the private agency's willingness to do home studies without cost to the families,
- finding ways to capitalized on "satisfied customers" in order to address the problem of credibility,
- institutionalizing the idea of local Councils being available to help people through the process,

- developing in-roads to the Black male leadership of the particular neighborhoods in focus,

- increasing the use of adoptive parents in working with persons applying for or interested in adoption,

- finding ways to improve the skill and confidence of adoption staff.

The Director of the State Division of Social Services, an invited guest speaker at the meeting, had been present during this Sub-Committee report and noted his support for the work of the group during his remarks. He also announced during his talk that state support would be available for project continuation in the next year.

Other aspects of this meeting included consideration of plans for this Guidebook, the need for a central answering point for callers responding to the public service announcement developed by the Committee, the Project's Director's report, reports on activities within the pilot counties, and preliminary plans for project work in the coming year, including expansion of the membership of the Advisory Committee.

Analysis and Recommendations

Key facets of the development and work of the Advisory Committee, which were instrumental in the effectiveness of the group, are noted below, together with recommendations for replication of this model in other states.

1. Composition

The Advisory Committee was composed of twenty-one persons representing key private and public sector agencies and foster and adoptive parents. The majority of the membership of the Advisory Committee was Black. This was seen as a critical factor in the effort to communicate to the larger Black community on a state-wide basis. Additionally, representatives from key state positions, private child placing agencies, the court system, and advocacy organizations were members of the Advisory Committee. It was important to include such representatives because of their ability to influence needed policy changes.

2. Setting and Schedule for Meetings

The conference setting used for all meetings of the Advisory Committee proved to be an important aspect of the group's development, as was the scheduling of the meetings to include parts of two days. Having meals together, relaxing together after the evening meeting, being away from telephones and other interruptions, enhanced the group's ability to work together during the formal portions of the meetings. This plan is recommended for at least the first year of a group such as the Advisory Committee, because of the diversity of the group's composition and because of the need to develop cohesiveness as a prelude to joint action.

3. Planned Learning Opportunities

All of the meetings of the Advisory Committee included presentations and other opportunities for members to learn about rather detailed aspects of the issues at hand. These topics included:

- the scope and nature of the problem,
- the responsibilities of various agency levels within the system and the procedures used at these levels,
- funding and administration of services,
- policy-making issues,

- special needs adoption strategies with Black families and children,

- child welfare system terminology and practices, and

- innovations being developed in adoption services with Black families and children.

Presentations were made by a variety of persons, most of whom were Black. Invited speakers included the Dean and faculty members of the School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, adoptive parents, state government officials, staff of the state agency, project staff, and committee members.

The action plans formulated by the Advisory Committee and the investement developed by Committee members in the action plans were an outgrowth of the topics presented formally at Advisory Committee meetings. It is recommended that any such state-level group adopt a method for encouraging the interplay of learning and planning.

4. Structure of the Committee

Several aspects of the Committee's structure contributed to the development of a sense of "ownership" of their work by the group. Officers were elected and were active throughout the year. Officers planned the meeting agendas (with staff assistance) and conducted the meetings (with staff sitting in the back row). Minutes were taken by a member of the Committee, and were typed and distributed by project staff. Frequent mailings by officers or staff to Committee members, such as minutes of meetings, quarterly project reports, reminders of upcoming meetings, etc., helped members stay connected with the Committee and the project despite the three months between meetings. It was extremely important to the work of the Advisory Committee that the group was helped to develop an identity of its own, based on responsibilities which were related to, but not identical with, those of the sponsoring agency and project. The development of an independent identity is recommended for similar state-level groups.

5. Statistical Reports

The regular presentation of up-to-date statistical reports from the state agency on the status of Black children in the foster care system had several important benefits. First, it was informative to members in becoming aware of the scope of the problem and of progress being made. Second, it encouraged the state agency to report tracking system data in such a way that the differential experience of Black and white children could be identified and analyzed. And third, the on-going awareness that informed citizens were interested in the topic served as an aid to the accountability of the state system. This strategy is highly recommended for adoption by replication projects.

6. Action Planning and Implementation

In keeping with the philosophy of the Friends of Black Children model regarding meaningful involvement of the Black community, the role of this Committee was far broader than an advisory one. Actions were taken in three major areas:

- public education, through development of public service announcements and brochures about adoption,

- agency policies and practices, through examination of barriers and making recommendations for improvements to persons in decision-making roles, and

- continuation and expansion of the focus on the adoptive needs of Black children throughout the state, through meetings with state officials.

A state-level task force or Council concerned with improving services to Black children and families needs to be provided information, freedom of action, and staff guidance and support. The Friends of Black Children experience shows that these resources will produce effective action planning and appropriate implementation.

7. Communication with Persons in State-level Decision-Making Roles

While the composition of the Advisory Committee included persons with direct program responsibility for child welfare services, including adoption, the Committee employed an effective strategy to engage the attention of persons in higher positions of authority. Both the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources and the Director of the Division of Social Services were invited to make presentations to the group at a regular meeting. Minutes of the meetings carefully reflected both the remarks of these persons and the Committee's discussion of the presentations. Representatives of the Committee requested a meeting with the Department of Human Resources Secretary in her office on one occasion, which request was granted. And the Secretary was an invited speaker at the year-end Continuity Conference. These learning and sharing opportunities were important for the invited speakers as well as for the Committee. A climate for joint problem-recognition, and mutually agreed upon recommendations and implementation strategies was facilitated through this involvement.

CONCLUSION

The Friends of Black Children model effectively demonstrated that the Black community and local social services agencies could work together for the benefit of Black children without homes. The project successfully established a network of community resources which served as a support system to Departments of Social Services. People involved with the project -- social workers, community leaders, project staff, and consultants -- were persuaded of the validity of the collaborative model.

Those agencies involved in the project found the process of facilitating change to be challenging and sometimes painful. Yet, in every county, agencies developed new policies and procedures which enhanced their capacity to serve the needs of Black families and children. Most initial resistance to the project dissolved as agency staff began to find homes for "special needs children" and as they successfully used new and effective ways to recruit Black families. By the end of one year, all agencies had greater flexibility in their criteria and procedures for working with prospective parents. There was increased knowledge and skill within agencies about the needs of Black children and families.

Community growth was also evident as a result of the Friends of Black Children model. Community Council members gained knowledge and insight about adoption needs in their localities. In every community, small groups of dedicated Community Council members were able to, in measures exceeding their membership, "spread the word" about waiting children. Furthermore, personal and collaborative relationships between agency staff and Council members served to dispel reservations that each group had held about the other. By witnessing the effectiveness of these community volunteers, the need for Black staff was better understood by some agencies. At the end of this first project year, there was increased capacity of community leaders to address the needs of waiting children.

In addition to local community and agency growth, the Friends of Black Children model provided leadership in discussion and review of State-wide adoption issues. Through its Advisory Committee, changes for the state adoption manual were recommended and questions related to the State-wide data system were addressed.

Most encouraging was the relative success of the Friends of Black Children model in meeting the needs of children and families. The efforts of the four local agencies and Community Councils resulted in a 400 percent increase in the number of Black families available to adopt Black children. Furthermore, even as a "demonstration project," there

were twenty-eight Black children placed with adoptive families in the four pilot counties. The collaborative efforts between the Black community and the local county Departments of Social Services resulted in an increase in the number of Black children placed with adoptive families and in an increase in the number of Black families approved to adopt.

There were also some unintended consequences of the Friends of Black Children model. Some counties had an increase in foster care applicants as a result of community adoption recruitment efforts. One agency had a rapid influx of adoptive applicants, effectively dispelling the notion that "Black families do not adopt."

In view of the early success of the Friends of Black Children model, it became imperative to expand its implementation. In the second year, 1983-1984, ten new North Carolina counties joined the project. We continue to learn a great deal about project implementation.

We are hopeful that our state, and other states, will eventually institutionalize community involvement in adoption. While we are pleased with the work of agencies now participating in collaborative efforts, there are countless children in other counties and states who could be served.

APPENDIX I

TRAINING RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

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History and Familiarity with Black Family Lifestyle: An Overview

The general goal of any training related to Black family culture is to increase the knowledge, skill, and competence of all social workers working on behalf of Black families and Black adoptive children. Specific objectives of any learning program must include at least the following:

- to gain a socio-historical perspective on the Black experience and value systems;
- to understand and appreciate the communication patterns of Black people and to bridge the interracial communication gaps which often exist in cross-cultural communication;
- to understand the strengths of Black families and to assess potential families from their sources of strengths rather than weaknesses;
- to improve the ability to adopt generic social work principles and skills to ethnic-sensitive practice in working with Black families and children;
- to assess and apply ethnic-competent agency policies and practice related to adoption services to Black families and children;

Some of the ways in which the learning can take place are:

- Consultation services provided by outside Black consultants or agency staff, the latter should not be limited to adoption staff but may involve Black staff from other parts of the agency.
- Training sessions designed to promote and elicit the exploration of personal values and those of other cultural value systems.

The training resources presented in this section provide basic information which can help to facilitate the goals of a successful learning program.

Workshop on Family Traditions and Lifestyles*

The Black family has been plagued by misconceptions, distortions and stereotypical images such as that it is matriarchal and unstable. Until recently, researchers, historians, and scholars had not begun the process of lifting the veil of mythology, that is of demythologizing, the Black family.

These misconceptions were rooted upon the beliefs that the familial patterns practiced in Africa, extended family networks, had practically no effect on the evolution of Black family life in the United States, and that the middle passage (the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean), the seasoning process in the West Indies, and the constant systemic dehumanization through slavery stripped the slave of his African cultural ethos. What the slave created in America was unstable, matriarchal and promiscuous families.

This interpretation was advanced by E. Franklin Frazier, a Black sociologist, and Stanley Elkins, an historian. They viewed the constant breakup of slave families and the selling of members individually as the preclusion of any possible fruition of secure, stable Black families. However, Frazier did differ with Elkins on one point. He maintained that stable Black families existed only among free slaves or house servants who were in close proximity to white families.[1]

Despite this difference, the Frazier-Elkins theory, that slavery destroyed the entire concept of family for Blacks, was popularized in the twentieth century by Daniel P. Moynihan. In 1965 the Office of Policy Planning and Research, Department of Labor, published a 78-page documentary report authored by Moynihan: The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. Dovetailing with the Frazier-Elkins myth, he stated:

> Obviously, not every instance of social pathology afflicting the Negro community can be traced to the weakness of family structure .... Nonetheless, at the center of the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure .... It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white Americans broke the will of the Negro people. Although that will has reasserted itself in our time, it is a resurgence doomed to frustration unless the viability of the Negro family is restored.[2]

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* Presented by Dr. Beverly Jones, Associate Professor, History Department, North Carolina Central University, Durham, North Carolina at a workshop sponsored by the Friends of Black Children Project for pilot project participant agencies at the Aqueduct conference Center, Chapel Hill, N.C., November 8, 1981.

The Moynihan Report is replete with the interpretation that the dysfunctioning element of the Black family during slavery continued in the twentieth century by the manifestation of broken families, a high rate of illegitimacy, matrifocal households and delinquency and crime. Despite the fact that The Negro Family has received tremendous criticism, it has engendered a heated discussion by scholars thusly advancing the need for further research on the Black family.

Based on the need to challenge the Moynihan report and a historical-sociological need to reinterpret the Black family, a few contemporary studies have begun to explore the diversity of Black families (two parent households, single-headed households) and to look at the influence of class structure upon Black families. Because of these works, one can no longer interpret the Black family, or any family, as monolithic. This point is so essential in the field of social work. In essence, the misconception that all Black families act in a particular way or have the same characteristics or values is anachronistic.

These recent historical studies have provided compelling reason to question the destructive impact which slavery allegedly had on the Black family. John Blassingame in Slave Community has contended that, although most Africans brought to America were from diverse demographic areas (tribes) and arrived without members of their African extended family, they brought with them the societal codes they learned regarding the African family. All slaves on a plantation became a family and related to each other as "sisters" and "brothers." Males provided leadership and survival techniques to the younger males. A form of adoption by which children separated from parents were immediately taken in by the community was prevalent. An older person became their mother or father and taught them to respect their elders and how to behave in two worlds, the external and internal world.[3]

Another major conclusion reached by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, econometric historians, was that the slave family was considerably stronger than had been believed. Further evidence which challenges the standing interpretation came from research conducted by Herbert Gutman, whose data was consistent with conclusions reached by Fogel and Engerman. In his ground-breaking essay, "Persistent Myths about the Afro-American Family," Gutman examined "the family patterns of those Negroes closest in time to actual chattel slavery," and did not find "instability," "chaos," or "disorder." Instead, in fourteen varied Southern cities and counties between 1865 and 1880, Gutman found seventy to ninety percent of all households were viable two-parent households. Gutman's data made clear that the vast majority of Black families were headed by both parents, and convincingly contradicted the view that slavery "destroyed" the Black family.[4]

A very provocative work that analyzed the class structure of Black families and described the lifestyles and beliefs is Charles Willie's A New Look at Black Families. This writer certainly recommends this book to all workers in the social services-related areas. Willie, a

sociologist, interviewed two-hundred families. Although he provided economic-wage structure for each of the families (middle-class, working-class, and lower-class), the importance of his work is his analysis of the lifestyles and beliefs of each group not the structure.[5]

According to Willie, the Black family of the present is quite diverse. Middle-class families desire to buy a home, to educate their children, and to encourage their children to pursue their goals. A two-parent household in which there is a dual partnership does exist. One or both parents are college graduates. Socially, they belong to fraternal or social groups, are active participants in the church, and often are involved in their community.[6]

The working-class families also desire to buy homes, not to rent. The woman contributes on the average more than thirty-three percent to the income while white females contribute about eighteen percent. One of the parents may work two jobs in order to educate their children and to provide stability to the family. They are very church-conscious and quite strict disciplinarians. There is more evidence of an extended family network than among middle-class families. They often provide their children with chores and persistently inculcate in them the importance of work. This group will consist of farmers who provide the family income on a seasonal rather than on a weekly basis.[7]

Lower-class families have a high number of one-parent households either due to divorce, separation or death. Like working-class families, the structure will consist of extended family members. Because of systemic discrimination, they are distrustful of governmental agencies. They are not often closely tied to the church, but have a deep love for children, and are strict disciplinarians. They also instruct their children at an early age on how to prepare meals and get small jobs.

Though many lower-class families are female-headed, there seems to be an increasing presence of one-parent households among all three groups. Black women are more likely than white women to be the single support of their households, not only because separation and divorce are more common among Blacks, but also because there are many fewer Black males of marriageable age than Black females in the fifteen to forty-four years age group. According to the 1980 Census of Population, in the adult Black population of 12.5 million, Black women outnumber Black men in the fifteen to forty-four age range by 680,000. The single-headed household provides a viable source of potential adoptive parents.[8]

If one is cognizant of these characteristics while interviewing middle-class, working-class, lower-class, and one-parent households, then a more wholesome and honest interchange can be possible between the social worker and the prospective adoptive parents. When working with Black prospective adoptive parents, those in social work related areas must be aware of the following major cultural factors: (1) the Black family, like other families, is not monolithic, but diverse; (2) the extended family network can serve as supportive linkages for adoptive

parents; and (3) the family is often closely tied to the church. Historically, Black families are often more receptive to taking in children outside of their immediate family, are more work-conscious as work forms an essential element of Black family life, and are often creative in the use of various means for survival.

Footnotes

1. Stanley Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life (Chicago, 1959); E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in Chicago (Chicago, 1932) and The Negro Family in the United States (Chicago, 1939).

2. Daniel P. Moynihan, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action (Washington, D.C., 1965), p. 76.

3. John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York, 1979).

4. Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, Time on the Cross; the Economics of American Negro Slavery (Boston, 1974); Herbert Gutman, "Persistent Myths About the Afro-American Family," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 6: 181-210.

5. Charles Willie, A New Look at Black Families, 2nd edition (New York, (1981).

6. Ibid., 47-50.

7. Ibid., 50-54.

8. Ibid., 54-57.

9. United States Census of Population 2:47-51.

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Workshop on Black Language*

The issue of Ebonics, the language of Black people, is only a subset of the larger issue of race and the social services delivery system. Most discussion of language differences continues to be thinly shrouded in pejorative assumptions about the deficits of Black people. Delineations of appropriate social work practice with the Black community is possible only when we abandon the notion that, as speakers, Black people are merely negative reflections of white people. Rather, the cognitive styles and cultural mores peculiar to the African's experience in America must underline redirections of the relationship between agencies and Black people.

Highlighting the need for this redirection is evidence that there is a set of guiding principles - an ethos - which frames Afro-American experiences. Wade Nobles argues that Black people derive their most fundamental self-definitions from several cultural and philosophical premises continuous with their West African heritage.

However, as a product of the dominant culture, the child welfare system is discontinuous with the common ethos of the Black experience. For example, agencies typically focus on adoption as an individual family experience; this may be alien to Black people socialized in the principle of collective unity. This cultural clash is reflected in research findings that Black people have external, while white people have internal, sources of motivation. Black people, oriented to the "we" rather than to the "I," are immediately confronted with conflict in the adoption process.

Consequently, consideration of the impact of being an enclave culture in a racist society also underlines special needs for social work practice. Of course, Black people must achieve competency in the tools of this culture if they are to survive. However, direction and motivation of the adoption process should be sharply focused upon and guided by recognition of the cultural heritage, history and values related to the struggle of Black people in the United States.

To examine the relationship between society, social work, and Ebonics, this workshop reviews common assumptions about Black language. Further, social attitudes and socialization patterns affecting language are outlined.

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* Presented by Dr. Valora Washington, Associate Professor, School of Education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina at a workshop sponsored by the Friends of Black Children Project for pilot project participant agencies at the Aqueduct Conference Center, Chapel Hill, N.C., November 9, 1982.

Myths About Language and Learning

Black people need to, and want to, acquire the tools needed to participate fully in the life of the United States. In relation to language, it continues to be evident that Black people do not share the communication skills valued in corporate America. Yet, linguistic research indicates that language skills are the strengths of Black children. For example, many Black children have been characterized as being more competent reasoners, better story tellers, and more skillful debaters than their white, middle-class counterparts. Why does this contradiction exist?

Two common rationales for this dilemma involve: (1) the myth that there is a "standard English"; and (2) the blatant denial that a Black lexicon exists or should be recognized.

First, in both social work practice and society, there is a stubborn insistence on the myth that there is a "standard English." The term "standard English" connotes that this specific socially accepted dialect is fixed and regular. However, within regions of the United States, there is wide variation in "standard English." Linguists have never achieved a complete description of what "standard English" is, if there is such a language.

One may refer to standard written language, since its grammar and vocabulary conform to world-wide uniformities. Still, it is important to distinguish written uniformities in a language from the pejorative assumption that a standard spoken style exists.

A second factor influencing interpretations of Black language skills is discussion about whether a Black vernacular REALLY exists. Despite our country's propensity to find humor in regional "accents," researchers have complained that there are many political pressures against the recognition and description of varying speech patterns.

Nonetheless, scholars have indeed isolated characteristics of a Black language. Researchers have demonstrated systemic contrasts and clear distinctions between the oral productive performances of Black and white dialect speakers. Remarkable similarities have been found in the spoken language of Blacks in widely separated geographical areas.

Language and Social Attitudes

As an essential aspect of culture, language is an active mediator of social functioning, social roles and group identity. Insofar as language reflects culture, Black language is reflective of the psychological and social experiences of people forced to maintain their own lexicon.

Consequently, societal variables cannot be disregarded in thoughtful analysis of language and the child welfare system. Social attitudes are important considerations because many of the problems facing Black students stem from the ways in which their language patterns are regarded by both themselves and others.

Dr. William Labou has demonstrated that prestige variables and social class are related to language contrasts. Speakers of prestige dialects react to language deviations as if they connote lack of intelligence and inferiority. Consequently, while it cannot be supported that forms of 'standard English' have linguistic superiority, they have attained sociological superiority. Specifically, 'standard English' forms have sociological superiority (that granted by social attitude) in the sense that speech differences are devalued. Although the basis of the devaluation may be one of social power, social power differences lead to real (adoption and foster care) effects when diversity connotes deviance.

Indeed, language styles are patterned on the basis of social experience, and thus have social class implications. People consistently rate the intelligence, social status, and education of Black language speakers lower than they do the same attributes of speakers of other dialects. Within each region of the United States, the dialect of different social groups is distinctive; people are aware of and can recognize the social meanings and implications of different dialects.

Language and Socialization

In addition to its influence on social attitudes, language also functions as a socialization mechanism. Many researchers describe Black children as "bathed" in verbal stimulation. These children learn that status and respect in Black culture can be earned through a range of activities involving the use of language -- e.g., through ritual insults, 'signifying.' Through imitation and modelling behaviors, younger children attempt to develop these skills through their observations of older children and adults.

Like all children, Black children internalize the cultural significance of language styles or skills in the context of their environment. Specifically, language transmits and reinforces modes of social functioning, group identity, and social roles.

Social Functioning

Distinct uses of language in Black societies have permeated social functioning and cultural expectations. As historically oral cultures, the expressive word, not written language, has been found to be the basis of both African and Black traditions. The African character of Black language has been preserved at the level of interpersonal relationships and expressive behavior.

Language processes are constantly confronted and influenced by social experiences and social interaction. Language is used to define and to create social order, and speakers internalize cultural norms and values through language.

Group Identity

The importance of the social functions of language is underlined by finding that many Blacks, although aware of sociolinguistic values, avoid using prestige forms of language and increase their use of Black language. This phenomenon occurs as a product of social interaction, which is, in turn, a partial determination of self-perceptions.

These findings suggest that language preference has relevance for both referent group identity and for self-concept. That is, the way people choose to speak depends not only on who they are, but on how they see themselves in relationship to others and on who they want to be. In a functional sense, Ebonics might express a Black identity, a Black self-concept, and, consequently, the individual self. Therefore, the prestige value of speaking a socially acceptable dialect loses its face validity in the absence of meaningful incentives.

These incentives have most often been absent in the history and experiences of Blacks in the United States. Rather, it has been necessary for the Black speech community to organize, maintain, and create its own language based on needs to cover cultural concepts or to fill psychological needs, such as keeping outsiders out and reinforcing community ties.

One consequence of the interaction between group identity and language has been that in-group expressions are often dropped or have their meanings changed as they become widely known. Another effect of this process has been that Black language patterns extend or change the meanings of particular English words, for example "bad" means "good." Denigration of these sources of personal and group identities by inattention to the functions of language are antithetical to the purposes of schooling.

Social Roles

Closely related to the relevance of language to group identity is concern with social roles. The uniqueness of one's language or dialect is often heralded in times of cultural or political change. Therefore, it is not surprising that demands for human rights and cultural pluralism, in the United States of America and in the world, often include advocates for appreciation and respect of alternative language patterns. For example, Ossie Davis demonstrates how the English language may be viewed as abusive to the aspirations and self-concepts of Black people because it pervasively denigrates and attaches negative connotations to the word "black."

Attitudes, including social role expectations, are reflected and reinforced by the grammar and vocabulary learned. That is, language may be viewed as defining, determining, and predisposing thought towards the objects or symbols they present. As a consequence, language can shape ideas about roles and images of people in society, while imposing limits on the kinds of thoughts one has about those roles and images. Further, social roles and images evolve in patterns necessary to the social, economic and/or political goals of a group of speakers.

Research indicates that even preschool children are aware of the negative images and restricted roles associated with both the color black and with Black people. However, research also demonstrates that teachers can successfully change these images. One method of change involves altering the language itself, thereby broadening concepts of social roles. Examples of this process include the Blacks' desire to be identified as "Black," rather than "Negro," and the feminists' preference for "Chairperson," rather than "chairman."

Conclusion

It is, therefore, necessary for social workers to understand how language functions among social groups and in different social situations.

Conflicts arise when Ebonics speakers are confronted with a social services system which ignores or denigrates their social and cultural experiences.

The following are suggestions for social workers which facilitate the development of sensitivity to cross-cultural language styles. Each of these suggestions affirms that positive communication will be facilitated to the extent that language and cultural diversity are acknowledged and accepted.

1. Examine your personal attitudes about language. Are social prestige factors in language overriding the pragmatic use of skills and knowledge which helps Black children to be placed in Black foster or adoptive homes? Negative attitudes about Ebonics can too easily be translated into low expectations for members of its speech community.

2. Do not assume that the Black person is not willing to communicate with you because of phonological and syntactical differences in language skills.

3. Deal with language diversity in a matter-of-fact way, thereby communicating acceptance and facilitating trust.

How to Keep Black Families After They Apply*

Insights for Workers and Agencies

Many agencies have realized that Black families DO adopt, and have launched recruitment efforts truly innovative in outreach to overcome the mistrust of agencies that often exists. Finding Black families is not the major problem; but keeping families through the home study process is another matter.

A special 1977 issue of the Black Child Development Institute's Black Child Advocate offered some of the best insights for workers who want to retain those families who do apply. Here are some excerpts (underlining added).

> Black response to recruitment efforts in adoption is a response of concern for Black children without families ... Secondly, Black people tend to personalize relationships rather than respond to agency professionals according to established role expectations ... Third, Black experience with agencies and institutions has often been one of non-support or rejection which makes Blacks reluctant to share sensitive personal information with agency personnel.
>
> The first step in relationship building is for agencies to recognize and accept the feelings of these resource families and respond sensitively and immediately. It is imperative that the agency assume that any Black family who contacts them is interested in providing a home. In keeping with this assumption, the agency should respond as rapidly as possible to the initial inquiry. Prolonged waits can only be destructive elements to relationship building with Black families who all too often have been 'put off' by the dominant society.
>
> Only such information as is necessary to begin the process should be taken by phone. This would primarily consist of the name of the family, address, and phone numbers...Questions posed by resource families should be answered. An agency staff member

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* Region IV Adoption Resource Center Newsletter, Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982.

should contact the family within 14 hours to schedule an appointment. The appointment should be scheduled within 10 working days of the inquiry. In no instance should a complex social history (application form) be mailed to prospective resource families prior to a face-to-face contact.

The personal interview with the resource family should explore and accept their reason for contacting the agency, share information about the children available, and the adoption process ... It is the resource family's responsibility to share information with the worker and to evaluate the meaning of that information in relation to an adoption plan. Resource families need to know why they are being asked to provide the information requested of them and its relevance to the adoption process. The decision to proceed with the adoption process constitutes a contract to determine, through an open and honest relationship, the degree to which the resource family currently is, or can be, a resource for a child.

Workers who take these comments seriously may recognize ways they can improve their relationships with Black applicants from the point of intake up to the beginning of a home study. There are many more subtleties of practice relevant to the home study itself, and how we often mis-assess Black family strengths. A good starting point is for agencies to do some healthy self-assessment of how their traditional procedures are perceived by Black resource families.

How to Develop a Community Resource Sheet*

Community resources, which are located in the Black community and/or are used by Black families in the community, can be valuable to social workers in several ways: 1) as sources of further information about needs and characteristics of Black families; 2) as referral sources for Black families; 3) as "leads" for resources within informal networks within the Black community; 4) as consultants on a case-specific or general basis. In addition, the process of searching for the resources to be included on the community resource sheet is a valuable opportunity for workers to become more familiar with the Black community as a whole.

The categories below can be modified to fit the resources in any particular community. Information to be obtained on each resource should include, at a minimum, the name of the organization, location, contact person and telephone number. Information should be kept up to date, should be added to as new contacts are made and resources discovered, and should be shared by workers so that each worker in a unit or agency does not need to "re-invent the wheel."

Similar resource sheets developed on other ethnic minority populations in the locality with whom the agency works can also be helpful.

Formal Resources

Churches (include, in addition to churches in the community, specific ministers, specific organizations within churches which may be concerned with families' needs, alliances of the ministers of Black churches, denominational organizations, etc.)

Social/Benevolent/Support Groups (fraternities and sororities, clubs, Black adoptive parent groups, Black foster parent groups, organizations with a neighborhood or community-wide human service focus, etc.)

Health Services/Physicians

Other Health Providers

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* Permanency Planning: The Black Experience, A Training Curriculum, Office of Continuing Education, School of Social Work, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Neighborhood School Counselors/Social Workers/Teachers and Other School Personnel In or From The Community

Informal Education/Language Programs/Adult Education

Early Childhood Education/Day Care Programs

After School Day Care/Recreation Programs

Tutoring Programs

Mental Health Resources (agency-related and private)

Community Action Programs

Summer Programs for Children

Other

Informal Resources

Neighborhood Day Care Providers

Community Store Keepers

Sports/Recreation Clubs

Barber/Beauty Shops

Knowledgeable Community Members (those who often serve an informal "ombudsman" function and/or are considered community leaders by community members)

Other

Fundraising Can Be Fun!!*

There are many fundraising ideas circulating among parent advocacy community groups that net large and small profits, some requiring a great deal of planning and coordination, and others requiring little or no outlay of cash. Here is a collection of old and new ideas with a twist or two that will add some zing to your fundraising efforts. The key is to adapt the ideas to your local setting, group size and need, and then go forth and raise dollars!

RAFFLES....Always try to get your raffle items donated, either by local merchants or members of your group. Merchants are receptive to this idea since it promises free publicity and/or some sort of recognition of their support of your cause.

Be sure to sell tickets for a price that will insure a profit, ask each member to sell a certain number of tickets, enlist the help of other community groups, i.e. Scout troops, and award a prize to the person selling the highest number of tickets.

Handcrafted and customized items make excellent prizes. Original cartoon drawings, matted and framed also make excellent prizes. (In order to get these original cartoons, write to the columnist in care of your local paper and request the original(s); mat and frame.) Raffling several items may net a large profit and offer some variety to the sale of tickets. You may want to make your raffle season-specific, i.e. $100 towards Easter outfits for two children, handmade Christmas ornaments, etc. Be sure to advertise through your local media and publicize the names of the winners.

MEALTIME EVENTS: Spaghetti Suppers, Pancake Breakfasts, Bar-B-Qs. The key to successful mealtime events is advance sales of tickets, donated food items, an accessible location, and tasty food. Be sure to advertise well and you might want to "take orders" from local businesses, offices and plants and offer to deliver their meals. Selling dessert items at an extra cost will also net extra profit. Inviting a local dee-jay to provide music, showing old movies or some other form of entertainment will draw additional customers. This can also be a theme event, i.e. Parisian Nite, '20s Nite, Oriental Evening, etc., and folks can "dress-up" for the occasion.

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* John Wolf, Region IV Adoption Resource Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, September 26, 1980.

BIDDING-ON-LUNCH-WITH....local politicians, celebrities or dignitaries. Contact a local restaurant to arrange this special event, request a donation of one or more meals or a discount on all meals. (The payoff for the restaurant is free publicity.) Be sure to advertise through your local media.

Bidding may take place at a PTA meeting or other gathering of the community. You may want to provide transportation to and from the restaurant for the honored guest. In the case of local politicians, be sure to plug your case for children's services.

A variation: Sponsor a luncheon or banquet in honor of your local politician or celebrity and sell tickets to the event.

FASHION SHOWS....Contact local department stores or speciality shops to determine their policy on sponsoring this type of event. (Some stores will sell their merchandise at discount to the models or to persons attending the event.) This, too, can be a season-specific event. Entertainment can be provided, snacks can be sold and door prizes awarded. Be sure to involve fathers and sons in this event. If it is a strictly adult affair, you may want to have a social hour or dance after the event with music provided by a local dee-jay.

LESSONS! LESSONS! LESSONS! This is another raffle idea. Raffle off guitar, dance, yoga, macrame, piano, art, tennis, etc. lessons. Contact local professionals, talented amateurs, or craftspersons about donating their time or talent to this venture. Be sure to include parent group members who have special talents.

ARTS 'N CRAFTS FLEA MARKET....Handcrafted, personalized, customized one-of-a-kind items for sale. You may want to start collecting items several months in advance of your Flea Market, sponsor craft making parties, and raffle a unique, original work the day of the event. Mall and shopping centers may be good locations, however, be sure that you have contacted the management about this. Also check to see if there are local ordinances governing this type of activity.

BUSINESS IS BOOMING!!! There are many businesses that have fundraising programs or packages. These plans often allow your group to purchase at wholesale and then sell at retail. Contact local photographers, doughnut shops, book stores, mail order stationers and check your Yellow Pages under fundraising to see if others are listed.

WORKSHOPS....Decide on a topic relevant to your community, secure a workshop leader, find a conference site, and charge a nominal fee. Some workshop leaders will donate their services but may require transportation costs; hotels will sometimes offer free meeting space if you can guarantee a certain number of meals for lunch.

PARTIES....Splash parties: Poolside fund and food fest. Items are donated for sale at the party.

Card parties: Tickets are sold, each winner receives a prize, refreshments can be served or included in the ticket price.

Discos: Sponsor a local dee jay, band or combo. Sell tickets and raffle a prize.

Other variations.....Bobby Sox Party, 50s Party, Penny-A-Pound.

SALE ITEMS....Tee shirts, bumper stickers, buttons, pens, pennants, caps, book markers, etc. Design a logo, contact local companies or art schools to see if they can print these items at a discount to you. Again, check the Yellow Pages of your telephone book.

LAS VEGAS NITE, BINGO....Fun for all. Check to see what your state's laws are governing this type of activity. (Usually, non-profit organizations can sponsor these events with no problems.)

WEEKEND AT THE HILTON ! Hotels may donate a weekend in their "special suite" to your organization or charge you a nominal fee. (Free publicity is again the selling point.)

DINNER FOR TWO. Another raffle idea. Select a very special restaurant for an intimate dinner for two.

FLY FIRST CLASS. Contact airlines to determine if they would donate first class air travel for two to Atlanta, Knoxville, Orlando, Mobile, Biloxi, Charleston, Chapel Hill, or Lexington. Arrange for your winners to meet local adoptive parents in the area or spend a night in a favorite hotel.

CAR FOR A YEAR. Many car dealers will jump at the chance to raffle off one of their demonstrators.

These are just a few ideas that may stimulate your creative thinking and entice you to go forth and raise dollars. The key, as stated previously, is to secure donations and to advertise your events well. Be sure to give recognition to those persons who donate goods or services, you may want to offer a subscription to your newsletter or any honorary membership in your organization. Another good idea is to sponsor a yearly luncheon or banquet to honor your volunteers, yourself included.

A note about advertising. Start advertising early and utilize "free publicity." Here are some methods: press releases, calendar notes (mailed to newspapers), feature stories, radio-tv public service announcements, free classifieds, invitations, church bulletins, fliers, posters, other organizations, etc.

Suggested Reading: The Grass Roots Fundraising Book by Joan Flanagan available through the Southeastern Resource Center for Children and Youth at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, or by writing - The Youth Project, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20007 ($5.25)

How to Plan an Adoption Seminar*

First, organize your committees to cover each aspect of the seminar. These may include: publicity, program, refreshment, and clean-up.

An Adoption Seminar is an ideal time to recruit new families, enlist support of other groups with similar goals, explore issues relating to adoption or child and family services, and sensitize the general public to the placement of special needs kids.

There are several publicity activities that can precede the actual seminar. Some of these activities are: Mall displays, television and radio talk shows, newspaper articles and editorials, mayoral proclamation of "Adoption Week/Day."

The seminar can consist of a panel of adoptive parents discussing their experiences and answering questions, presentation by county/state workers about the agency's policies, types of children available, etc.; local legislators can present information about pending legislation affecting children and families, budgetary matters, etc.; representatives from child advocacy groups discussing techniques, strategies to affect legislative action, current issues; some person from your organization may want to talk about organizing a parent support group, how to work with agencies, resources available to parents who adopt special needs kids; local mental health professionals, pediatricians can explain various handicapping conditions and their implications for the child and the family.

If funds are available or if you can secure the services of a friendly printer, publish a brochure about your group, its goals, etc.; secure brochures from public and private adoption agencies, prepare a portable display board with pictures of the types of children available for adoption, subscribe to your state's photo listing book and have it available for participants to look at. Have available copies of books on adoption or a reading list for interested adopters. Provide a sign-up sheet for persons interested in attending your meetings or securing more information about the group and adoption.

Invite representatives from other parent groups or groups and individuals with similar goals. (Service clubs, fraternities, sororities, political party workers, religious leaders, reporters, child advocacy groups, etc.)

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* John Wolf, Region IV Adoption Resource Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514, September 26, 1990.

Show films about adoption.

Be sure to canvas your group to determine the kind of program content that might attract the largest group of people.

This would be a good time to offer a subscription to your newsletter, sell baked goods, craft items, bumper stickers, buttons, etc.

Good luck!!

How Children Come Into Foster Care*

Child Welfare Services are defined as services designed to help meet the needs of children and support families in carrying out their parenting rights and responsibilities. There are three different types of Child Welfare Services:

Supportive Services are those services such as day care or counseling which help families function and meet the needs of their children.

Supplemental Services are also designed to help families remain together by providing resources such as food stamps, homemaker services, or child protective services, to supplement the resources which families themselves can provide.

Substitute Services provide 24-hour care for children in foster homes or residential group care settings when they cannot be cared for safely by their parents in their own homes. This service is also called Foster Care Service.

Supportive services are usually provided when the parents themselves request help. Sometimes parents request supplemental services as well, but sometimes these services are provided by an agency such as the Department of Social Services due to their concern about the safety and well-being of the children. The agency usually becomes involved with the family because a report has been made to the agency by a concerned neighbor, family member, school, or other community agency that the children may be in danger or are not being well cared for or supervised. Some community agencies such as schools, day care centers, hospitals, etc., are required by law to report situations where there is a suspicion that children are abused or neglected. The agency's intention in these situations is to provide the kind of help to the family which can keep the family together and can assure that the children are safe and well-cared for.

Unfortunately, agencies do not provide as much help to intact families as is needed, for a variety of reasons. When supportive and supplemental services are not available, or are not provided in a way that really helps families, or when the family stress is so great that these services cannot help solve the family's problems, then children are placed in foster care.

Some children enter foster care through a voluntary request by the parents; in some cases the parents have placed the child in foster care

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* Adapted from a presentation by Ms. Marti Pryor-Cook, Advisory Committee Member, at the Friends of Black Children Advisory Committee Meeting, February, 1983.

as a part of their voluntary release of the child for adoption. However, most children enter foster care because the Court has decided that it is in the best interest of the children not to remain with their parents for a period of time. The Court makes this decision based on information provided by the county Department of Social Services which has a legal responsibility to help assure that the children in the community are protected. Many factors influence the agency's decision as to whether the family can be served together or whether the children must be placed in foster care; however, the Court always makes the final decision.

When children are placed in foster care, they are usually placed in the home of a family which serves as a licensed foster family for the agency. These families are volunteers; they care for children who need foster care services because they want to help children and families. The agency pays the family for part of the cost of food, clothing and shelter for the children. The intention almost always is that the children will live with the foster family only for a temporary period of time, until some permanent plan can be made for them.

"Permanency planning" is a term which describes the intention that all children will grow up in a nurturing permanent family of their own. When children are in foster care, this means that, for a period of time at least, their biological parents are unable to provide this permanent care. However, because of a commitment to permanency planning, agencies try hard to see that children do not grow up in temporary foster families. Therefore, very soon after a child is moved to a foster family, work begins to develop a permanent family situation for the child.

The first and most preferred choice for a permanent family for a child is the child's own biological family. In most cases, the agencies continue to work very closely with the child's own family to try to solve the problems which caused the child to need to be in foster care in the first place. In many situations, this effort is successful and the child is able to return home.

If the birth family's problems are very great, or if for some other reason the child is not able to return home soon, the next choice for a permanent family is the child's relatives. Aunts and uncles, grandmothers, older brothers or sisters, may be asked to consider becoming the permanent family for the child.

When neither the child's birth family nor relatives can become the permanent family, the next preferred option is adoption with a new permanent family. The Friends of Black Children Community Councils are helping to make this possible for more children through their work to find adoptive families.

If adoption is not a possibility for a child either, then the child is very likely to grow up in foster care, often moving around from one foster home or institution to another, never feeling like he or she belongs. This is not good for children but, unfortunately, it still happens to far too many children in our country.

APPENDIX II

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCE GUIDE

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Films

"Everybody Needs a Forever Home"

This film depicts some of the myths, fears, and realities of adoption, as told by adoptive parents and children. Available from: Distribution Coordinator, Media Services Division, Texas Department of Human Resources, P.O. Box 2960, Austin, Texas 78769.

"Taking Care of One's Own"

A slide presentation of non-traditional people who have adopted children with special needs. A single retired mother, a biracial couple that adopts a biracial child, and a single father who adopts eleven children are featured in this slide. Available from Southeast Resource Center for Children and Youth Services, University of Tennessee, Office of Continuing Social Work Education, 1838 Terrace Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee 379963920.

"Our Child"

This film shows a seminar, led by staff members from Homes for Black Children, for master's students in the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. The discussion centers around ways to reduce the anxiety of prospective adoptive parents, and strategies to successfully place adoptive children. Available from Homes for Black Children, 1340 Calvert Street, Detroit, Michigan 48206.

"Reflections"

A 30-minute video-tape of a television program on Black adoption in North Carolina. It addresses the problems and the most prevalent myths, and presents interviews with both adoptive and foster families. A good source for public information regarding Black adoption. Available from: Friends of Black Children Project, Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Friends of Black Children Year-end Conference"

A video-tape presentation of participant social services agencies and community volunteers. This video-tape depicts the enthusiasm and commitment of both social services agencies and Black citizens in a community organization approach for the adoption of Black children. Presents a developmental approach to finding families for Black children. Available from: Friends of Black Children Project, Group Child Care Consultant Services, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Black Children and the Adoption Process: A Trilogy""

A videotape in three parts which depict: I. The Children; II. The Interview; and III. Adoptive Applicants who successfully completed the

adoption process. Available from Rockingham County Department of Social Services, 102 South Scales Street, Reidsville, North Carolina.

"The Friends of Black Children Project: One Agency's Experience"

A video-film presentation which summarizes the agency's experiences in implementing the project. Available from Rockingham County Department of Social Services, 102 South Scales Street, Reidsville, North Carolina.

National Adoption Resources

Homes for Black Children
2340 Calvert Street
Detroit, Michigan 48206

One Church One Child
510 North Dearborn
Room 400 Chicago, Illinois 60610

National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc.
2008 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10035

National Black Child Development Institute
1463 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

TEAM (Training and Education in Adoption Methods)
North American Council on Adoptable Children
2001 S Street NW
Suite 540
Washington, D.C. 20009

State and Local Black Adoption Groups

North Carolina

Nelson Hairston, Chairperson
Rockingham County Friends of Black Children Council
911 Georgia Avenue
Eden, NC 27288

Gladys Lawson, Chairperson
Halifax County Friends of Black Children Council
Route 3, Box 44AB
Enfield, NC
(919) 445-5688

Ella Evans, Chairperson
Cabarrus County Friends of Black Children Council
724 Old Charlotte Road
Concord, NC 28025

R. Earl Jones, Chairperson
Wake County Friends of Black Children Council
PO Box 1971
Raleigh, NC 27602

Hunter Haith
Black Adoption Task Force, Inc.
P.O. Box 21542
Greensboro, NC 27406

We Care for Black Children, Inc.
Clifton Hayes
1102 Dayton, Apt 7
Durham, NC

Ann Dawkins
High Point Black Adoption Task Force
3231 Lofty View Court
High Point, NC 27260

Metroliner Black Adoption Task Force
PO Box 16186
Charlotte, NC 28216

Other States

South Carolina Black Adoption Committee
PO Box 2516
Columbia, SC 29202

Mississippi Advocates for Minority Children, Inc.
PO Box 22971
Jackson, MS 39205

Up Beat
760 S. Hancock St.
Louisville, KY 40203

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APPENDIX III

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES

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Pre/Post Test

1. How old must a person be in order to adopt a child? (Please encircle only one letter.)

   a) No minimum age
   b) At least 16 years old
   c) At least 18 years
   d) At least 21 years old
   e) At least 25 years
   f) At least 30 years old
   g) Don't know

2. What is the oldest age a person can be and still adopt a child? (Please encircle only one letter.)

   a) No older than 45 years old
   b) No older than 55 years old
   c) No older than 65 years old
   d) No older than 75 years old
   e) No maximum age
   f) Don't know

3. Which of the following marital statuses are allowed to adopt a child? (Please encircle as many as are correct.)

   a) Married
   b) Never married
   c) Widowed
   d) Divorced
   e) Separated
   f) All of the above
   g) Don't know

4. In order to adopt a child, a person must have at least how much education? (Encircle only one letter.)

   a) No minimum education required
   b) Must be able to read and write
   c) At least a sixth-grade education
   d) At least a eight-grade education
   e) At least a high school education
   f) At least a college degree
   g) Don't know

5. For a family to adopt a child, what must be the family's minimum income? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) No minimum income required
b) About $5,000
c) About $10,000
d) About $15,000
e) About $20,000
f) $25,000 or more
g) Don't know

6. Only families who are members of a church may adopt a child. (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) True
b) False
c) Don't know

7. Only people who can not have children themselves are allowed to adopt a child. (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) True
b) False
c) Don't know

8. There is a limit on the number of children a family can have and still be allowed to adopt a child. (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) True
b) False
c) Don't know

9. A family must own its own home in order to adopt a child. (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) True
b) False
c) Don't know

10. Which of the following describes how the average child in foster care placement performs in school? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) Somewhat below his or her age group
b) About the same as his or her age group
c) Somewhat above his or her age group
d) Don't know

11. Which of the following groups of children would be classified as "Special Needs Children?" (Please encircle the letter of all that apply.)

a) Black infants
b) White infants
c) Black teenagers
d) White teenagers
e) Black children with physical and/or mental handicaps
f) White children with physical and/or mental handicaps
g) Siblings groups who are all under age seven
h) Don't know

12. Whose responsibility is it to recruit families to adopt children? (Please encircle the letter of all that apply.)

a) The Department of Social Services
b) The Federal Government
c) Church groups
d) Relatives and/or friends
e) Members of the community at large
f) All of the above
g) Don't know

13. Approximately what percent of the residents of North Carolina are Black? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) Less than 10%
b) 10 - 15%
c) 20 - 25%
d) 30 - 35%
e) 40 - 45%
f) More than 50%
g) Don't know

14. Of all the children who are in the Child Welfare System in North Carolina, approximately how many do you think are currently in the custody or placement responsibility of agencies? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) 2,000
b) 5,000
c) 8,000
d) 11,000
e) Don't know

15. Of all the children who are in the Child Welfare System who are currently in the placement responsibility of agencies in the state, approximately what percent do you think are Black? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) 1 or 2%
b) 5 - 10%
c) 20 - 30%
d) 40 - 50%
e) 60 - 70%
f) 80% or more
g) Don't know

16. Of the children currently in foster care placement, approximately what percent do you think are Black? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) 1 or 2%
b) 5 - 10%
c) 20 - 30%
d) 40 - 50%
e) 60 - 70%
f) 80% or more
g) Don't know

17. Of all the children currently in foster care placement, who do you think has been in placement longer? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) Black children
b) White children
c) Don't know

18. Of all the children in the Child Welfare System who are legally free for adoption, approximately what percent do you think are Black? (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) Less than 20%
b) 25 - 35%
c) 45 - 55%
d) 65 - 75%
e) 85 - 95%
f) Don't know

19. Of all the children in the Child Welfare System who are legally free for adoption, there are more females than males. (Please encircle only one letter.)

a) True
b) False
c) Don't know

20. What do you think the function of the Friends of Black Children Community Council should be? (Please encircle the letter of all that apply.)

a) To recruit families for Black children
b) To educate the Black community about the needs of Black children
c) To serve as a link between the Department of Social Services and the Black community
d) To serve as a support group for adoptive families
e) Other—please specify_____
_____
f) Don't know

Revised 12/83

Post-Project Survey

Please indicate your response to each to the following statements by encircling the letter beside the answer which best describes your feelings.

1. I feel that the Council can be of much assistance to the DSS staff in recruiting families to adopt Black children.

    a) agree very strongly
    b) agree strongly
    c) agree
    d) disagree
    e) disagree strongly
    f) disagree very strongly

2. I feel that most DSS staff members want the help of the Council in recruiting families to adopt Black children.

    a) agree very strongly
    b) agree strongly
    c) agree
    d) disagree
    e) disagree strongly
    f) disagree very strongly

3. I feel that most Council members want to help the DSS staff by recruiting families to adopt Black children.

    a) agree very strongly
    b) agree strongly
    c) agree
    d) disagree
    e) disagree strongly
    f) disagree very strongly

4. I feel that the Council and the DSS staff are better able to work together now than they were at the beginning of this project.

    a) agree very strongly
    b) agree strongly
    c) agree
    d) disagree
    e) disagree strongly
    f) disagree very strongly

5. I feel that this project has greatly increased the awareness of the Black community that there are Black children who are waiting to be adopted.

a) agree very strongly
b) agree strongly
c) agree
d) disagree
e) disagree strongly
f) disagree very strongly

6. I feel that this project has greatly increased the knowledge of the DSS staff about local, Black-community resources.

a) agree very strongly
b) agree strongly
c) agree
d) disagree
e) disagree strongly
f) disagree very strongly

7. I feel that this project greatly increased the chances that Black children will be adopted.

a) agree very strongly
b) agree strongly
c) agree
d) disagree
e) disagree strongly
f) disagree very strongly

8. I feel that the Council and the DSS staff should continue to work together in the future.

a) agree very strongly
b) agree strongly
c) agree
d) disagree
e) disagree strongly
f) disagree very strongly

9. Other comments:

APPENDIX IV

SAMPLE MEDIA AND PUBLICITY MATERIAL

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note: Public service announcements (PSA's) can be sent to television and radio stations. See sample below.

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please make the following announcement during your public services announcement:

The Friends of Black Children will meet _____ _____ at _____p.m. at the _____ _____ in _____, North Carolina. Any person interested in adoption is cordially invited to attend. Information will be shared on the need for adoptive homes for Black Children.

Thank you,
Joe Webster, Chairperson
Rockingham County
Friends of Black Children Council

Newspaper articles and radio announcements should be received two weeks prior to anticipated event. Also, when contacting television stations for possible coverage, have a programming idea in mind. Be ready to tape immediately. Usually television stations respond quickly to community interest programs.

NEWS RELEASE
FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS

The Rockingham County Friends of Black Children was founded because there was a need to increase community awareness about the needs for Black adoptive homes. Efforts of the Council have been very successful. The Council first began holding informational meetings in February, 1983. The informational meetings gave prospective adoptive parents the opportunity to attend such meetings in their communities. There have been 21 inquiries from Black families to the local department of social services so far. Two of the families have completed the adoption preparation process and an additional three Black families are waiting for their adoptive placements.

Presently, the council has two concerns. They would like to increase the number of Black families that complete the adoption process. Both Chairman (name) and Vice-Chairman (name feel this can be done by educating the Black community about the adoption process, from the point of initial inquiry to the final order. People sometimes "screen" themselves out due to their lack of understanding of certain information. For instance, a prospective applicant may become discouraged at the point of initial inquiry, he is told that "there are no children available in our county." The assumption may be that there are no children. The applicant needs to understand that departments of social services throughout the state work co-operatively to place children. If a county has no children, but adoptive applicants, they will look to other counties for children. For instance, Rockingham County has only 3 children needing adoptive homes. Yet, there are approximately 428 Black Children across the state that need adoptive homes. Any eligible prospective applicant can be considered for these children.

The second concern is the continuous need for Black families to adopt school age children, especially Black males. Presently, Rockingham County has three Black male children, ranging from ages 7 years to 15 years. At the end of last quarter, there were 65 Black males, ages 7-12 years needing adoptive homes in the state. The council hopes to recruit families that are especially interested in adopting Black males.

The Council will meet on Thursday, November 10, 1983 at the Eden Library. Any persons interested in joining the efforts of the Council are cordially invited to attend. Additional information can be obtained by calling

(Include name and phone number of officers and area co-ordinators)

NEWS RELEASE

COUNCIL SEEKS SUPPORT OF LOCAL BLACK CHURCHES

The Wake County Friends of Black Children Council is seeking the support of area ministers and churches in recruiting Black adoptive families. The Council feels that the support of the Black churches is crucial to a successful recruitment campaign in Wake County. The Council also believes that the church is the best vehicle for getting information to the Black community.

There has been little or no community response for adoption of school age children. Is it because the community is not aware that these children are waiting? This is where the local churches can help. The Black community needs to know that there are 230 Black children waiting for adoptive homes.

The Council also hopes that local ministers will be able to inform prospective adoptive applicants that expectations or requirements have changed. It is felt that people have called in the past when expectations for adopting parents were somewhat unreasonable. For instance, in the past, the adoptive mother was expected to remain home eighteen (18) months to two (2) years after the placement of a child. This is no longer true. Also in the past, single parents were discouraged from applying. Single parents can adopt. Persons with lower incomes should inquire about adoptions. It is not a matter of how much you make but how manage what you have.

Father George Clements, a Catholic priest, in Chicago adopted a nine year old son about two (2) years ago. Since that time, he has launched a "One Church, One Child" campaign to recruit Black adoptive families. Father Clements believes that if there is one adoptive family in every Black church, then there will be no Black children without permanent families. The Wake County Friends of Black Children Council shares this belief and would like to see local Black churches actively involved in efforts to find homes for Black children.

There will be an informational meeting for any persons interested in adopting on Tuesday, April 5th at the First Baptist Church in Fuquay-Varina. The church is located on Northwest Street. Area ministers are cordially invited to attend also. Persons who would like information prior to the April 5th meeting should contact Sue Stevens at Wake County Department of Social Services at 821-1746.

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN LAUNCH RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The Rockingham County Friends of Black Children Council held its second meeting on Thursday, January 6th, at the St. Paul United Methodist Church in Reidsville. The goal of the Council is to recruit Black families for adoption by working jointly with the local Department of Social Services.

The Council feels that basically more Black persons would apply to adopt children if they were not "frightened off" by myths. For instance, some people think that you cannot adopt if you are single, if you do not own your own home, if you do not have a certain income. The Council also feels that persons are not inquiring because they are not aware of the need. Presently, across the state of North Carolina, there are 445 Black children legally free for adoption. There is an additional 334 Black children that are in the process of being legally cleared for adoption.

Beginning in February, the Council will hold bi-monthly informational meetings for persons wanting to adopt. Factual information will be shared regarding the adoption proceeding in Rockingham County. The informational for February will be held February 1st at the St. Stephens United Methodist Church, located at the intersection of North Highway and Piedmont Streets in Madison. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Any person interested in adopting is cordially invited to this meeting.

Area coordinators have been identified for each major community in the county. These coordinators will arrange meetings in their communities and will serve as community resource persons. In the very near future, these persons will have photo listings of children waiting to be adopted throughout the state. The area coordinators are as follows:
(Include names and phone numbers for area co-ordinators)

1/24/83
The Raleigh Times

New Wake project targets problem

Few black children adopted

By SHARON KILBY
Times staff writer

Lindsey is described as a "bubbling, energetic and attractive" little boy with a "flashing smile" and a tendency to chatter.

He loves to hug and kiss and is a hearty eater who "will sample anything left unwatched."

He likes to go to church and generally is on his best behavior at social gatherings.

Lindsey needs consistent attention and love. "This problem-free little boy can be an asset to a lucky family."

That description appears below Lindsey's picture in the PALS book, a photo listing compiled by Wake Social Services of children awaiting adoption in North Carolina.

Lindsey's entry is dated December 1980 when he was 5 years old. Now he is 7. Despite the positive profile, Lindsey still does not have a permanent home.

A big part of Lindsey's problem may be that he is black. A growing number of blacks are appearing on the lists of children cleared for adoption. But few black families show an interest in adopting, social workers say.

The Wake Friends of Black Children Council hopes to tackle that problem with information about the need for black adoptive parents and about the adoption process.

Wake was one of four counties selected to participate in a $150,000 federally-funded demonstration project, conducted from the University of North Carolina School of Social Work. The others counties are Rockingham, Halifax and Cabarrus.

Lottie Sneed, program specialist for the project, said that 45 percent of the 7,856 North Carolina children cleared for adoption are black. Only 22 percent of the state's population is black.

Black children in North Carolina spend an average of 4.5 years in foster care before they are adopted, more than a year longer than white children.

Sue Stevens, a social worker in the adoption unit of the Wake Department of Social Services, said that last year Wake County placed nearly two white children for every black child in its custody.

See CHANCES, page 2-A

Chances for adoption lag for black children

Continued from page 1-A

This year, Wake DSS expects to have 21 black children cleared for adoption. At this time, only one black family has been approved and is waiting to adopt a child of a particular age. Another black family is close to getting approval and six more are being studied.

Out of 24 families waiting to be approved in December, only five were black.

Ms. Sneed said that economics and misconceptions about the adoption process have discouraged blacks from trying to adopt a child.

"People think you have to be middle class to apply — that lower income families cannot consider adoption," she said.

They also don't realize that single and divorced people may adopt, that people 60-years-old or older make suitable parents for older children, and that adoptive parents need not have high educational levels, Ms. Snead said.

"We don't expect to find families in rural areas with high educational levels," Ms. Snead said. "Some of the special children who are slow in school don't need the pressure of families with high expectations."

Even large families may be able to make room for more, she said. "The ability to take on another child is decided on an individual basis."

The Wake Council, a committee of six, plans to attack these myths in a series of meetings in the black communities and small towns of Wake County.

Wake DSS holds information meetings for people interested in adopting every other month at Hudson Memorial Church. Ms. Stevens said that location probably does not attract many black families.

The committee will use the alternate months to hold similar meeting in sites in the county that are convenient for blacks. The first meeting will be Feb. 15 at the Few Complex on old Garner Road.

William C. Hickok, 40, the council chairman, can speak to others from first-hand experience. Four years ago, he and his wife Barbara, 32, adopted a 7-month-old girl. They also have two natural children who are 12 and 2½, and they are expecting another.

"I've had the privilege of being able to bring children into my family both ways," Hickok said. "I want to let peple know there are no deep dark secrets about it."

Hickok, computer center operations supervisor at Kennametal, said adoption was not trouble-free for him and his wife. The child was premature and sickly, he said, and was unable to digest all sorts of formulas.

"She came to us a very insecure child," Hicock said. "That leaves me feeling that from day one these children know. They need extra love and attention and it all pays off."

Many children waiting for families have spent many insecure years, living in a succession of foster homes, Ms. Sneed said.

Foster care, a temporary placement, does not offer the security of adoption, she said. For instance, during the trials of adolescence that try the limits of biological parents, some foster parents simply give up their charges and their responsibilities, Ms. Sneed said.

Ms. Stevens, who acts as liason between Wake Social Services and the Friends of Black Children Council, said many black children came into DSS custody through the courts because they were neglected or abused.

Also, many don't have Lindsey's "problem-free" credentials. There's 10-year-old J.J., who can speak only 5 or 6 words, is severely retarded and autistic; 11-month-old Kirk, "a cute little boy" who smiles, coos and laughs out loud, rolls from abdomen to back and has cerebral palsy; or sisters, Renee, 11, Sherry 10 and Tiffany, 8, who need someone willing to swell their families by three children at once.

The Wake Friends of Black Children Council, a committee of six, has appointed coordinators for four Wake County areas — the Zebulon, Wendell and Knightdale area; Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs; Apex and Cary; and Wake Forest and Rolesville.

They hope to put the PALS book in a central place in each of these areas, such as a library, and to make it easier for any family to get information about the adoption procedure.

"Every year (the children) wait, they have grown up another year without a family of their own," Ms. Stevens said.

BEST COPY

Group wants to help black kids find homes

By BEVERLY MILLS
Staff Writer

In North Carolina, 230 black children are waiting for adoption. They may have to wait another couple of years.

A new group, the Wake County Friends of Black Children Council, is trying to recruit black parents interested in adoption. Bill Hickok of Raleigh, the group's chairman, wants blacks to know that adoption isn't unusual or difficult.

"Black people aren't used to adoption," said Hickok, a data operations supervisor for Kennametal. "When my wife, Barbara, and I adopted a daughter four years ago, we had the feeling of, 'Gee, are we the only ones doing this?' "

The council will talk about adoption at a meeting Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the First Baptist Church on Northwest Street in Fuquay-Varina. After the group's first meeting in February, seven of the 16 couples attending filled out adoption applications.

Black families are particularly needed because more black children than white need homes, and the N.C. Division of Social Services won't approve cross-racial adoptions. About 59 percent of the children in North Carolina waiting to be adopted are black; the state's total population is 22 percent black. Those black children, most of them healthy and school aged, can expect to wait twice as long for parents as white children will.

The main reason black children wait longer — often up to three years — is because the black community isn't aware of the need, said Sue Stevens, a case worker with the Wake Department of Social Services.

"A woman told me the other day that she had no idea that so many black children needed homes," Ms. Stevens said. "She said, 'Black people don't give up their children. We just don't do that.' "

Once extended families would have cared for the children, she said. "But with the economic situation the way it is, people just don't have the finances."

Finding families to adopt children is partly an educational mission. People need to understand that social services departments are not simply welfare agencies to be avoided, Ms. Stevens said. And adoption is easier than many people realize. Adoptive parents do not have to be rich or hold white-collar jobs. Adoptive mothers may work, and single people may adopt.

News photo by Phil Byrd

Bill Hickok with Stacy, right, and Bryan

Financial aid also is available. Most school-age black children qualify for $100 a month in aid, Ms. Stevens said. Children with special medical needs can get additional aid of up to $1,200 a year, and if they need physical or psychiatric therapy, they may receive another $1,200 a year.

Most of the children available for adoption are not orphans, Ms. Stevens said. They are children whose parents have given them up for adoption and children whom the courts have ordered to be given up for adoption.

Friends of Black Children wants people who are toying with the idea of adoption to know that they are needed, Ms. Stevens said. "So far in Wake County for 1983, 95 percent of the children available for adoption are black," she said.

The group plans to hold meetings every other month, alternating months with similar meetings sponsored by the department of social services. The department-sponsored meetings usually are held in Raleigh in a white church in a predominantly white neighborhood, Ms. Stevens said.

"Many black people in rural areas aren't going to drive that far," Ms. Stevens said. "And many of them won't feel comfortable in that setting. Friends of Black Children is trying to fill the gap."

The group is filling another gap, too. While it's helpful to listen to a social worker, most potential adoptive parents need reassurance from someone who actually adopted a child. That's Bill Hickok's forte.

"People can look at me and know that I did it and hear that everything has worked out great," Hickok said.

The Hickoks had an 8-year-old daughter, Marion, and had been trying unsuccessfully for four years to have another child. They adopted Stacy, a 7-month-old, and soon Mrs. Hickok found out that she was pregnant. A son, Bryan, was born, and in February the Hickoks had another daughter, Alicia.

The Hickoks said they haven't encountered any problems as a result of having birth children and an adopted daughter. The only difference in the children, Hickok said, is that Stacy tends to be somewhat insecure.

"I've talked with other adoptive parents who have found the same thing," Hickok said. "You know how you give a newborn child all kinds of attention. The only thing I can figure is that some newborns in foster homes just don't get as much attention."

Stacy is 4, and her parents have just begun to introduce the idea of adoption to her. "We want to present it in a very positive way," Hickok said. "We'll tell her that her mother didn't give her up because she didn't love her. But she already had an 18-month-old, and no father, and she couldn't take care of both children."

Many people are afraid to adopt an older child because they fear the child will have too many emotional problems. Narvie Evans of Raleigh, a retired housekeeper, adopted a 7-year-old son seven years ago and also reared a grandchild, who is now 17.

"I never hesitated a minute to do it," Mrs. Evans said. "After I adopted a child, it made my son, Tony, get interested in it, and he and his wife adopted a daughter.

"When I think about all those children who need homes, it makes me feel real bad. If I wasn't 62, I'd adopt some more."

BEST COPY

Daily Independent, Kannapolis, N.C. March 1, 1983

Adoption program underway

Cabarrus County Friends of Black Children Council held its first public meeting at the First United Church of Christ last night and more than 30 women, children and couples attended to learn about adoption and foster parenthood.

Movies were shown and statistics rattled off. Pictures of homeless black children were passed out, followed by application forms. There was no pressure — just pleas.

About 7,784 children were in placement in the state through the Department of Social Services. While 3,559 or 46 percent are black, the rate of adoption is dismal, Program Specialist Lottie Sneed said.

Recently in Cabarrus County there were seven children waiting for adoptive parents: two white and five black children. While the two white children were placed, the five black children are still waiting for someone to open their doors for them, she said.

"What it boils down to is that the children need some one to love," DSS worker Olivia Williams told the audience. Chosen as one of four counties in the state to participate in the Friends of Black Children program, Cabarrus is one of 33 counties included in Region I where there are 2,624 children in DSS custody. About 785 of those are black.

The average stay of a white child in the government's custody is 3 years and three months while the black child stays nearly a year longer. Last year Cabarrus DSS had a waiting list for parents who wanted white children. More than 30 applications were filed and countless inquires made, DSS worker Judy Greene said. Only one application was filed for a black child.

"We had to close intake for white children from infant to 8-years-old," she said. "The white children and black children come into the system at about the same rate. The problem is the black children just stop. The white children keep moving through as homes become available. The black children don't."

The state has provided $150,000 for the four regions to come up with some answers to the problem. Cabarrus DSS workers are volunteering their without pay.

Ms. Sneed believes the main problem might be misinformation or lack of information on the applicants part. As the first step in searching for the answers, the Friends of Black Children Council will begin informational meetings — like last night — where residents can ask questions. The basics of adoption and foster parenthood are explained in yellow pamplets.

The next gathering will be March 15 at Westminsiter Reform Presbyterian Church at 309 Cabarrus Avenue.

Give a child a home

Department of Social Services employee Oliva Williams hands Jamard Williams and Ursula Bost some brochures detailing the Cabarrus County Friends of Black Children Council. The council, which had an informational booth at Carolina Mall Saturday, will hold its first public information meeting 7 p.m. today at the First United Church of Christ located at the corner of Lincoln and Tournament streets in Concord. The public is invited to attend and learn about the adoption of black children. — Marty Price photo

BEST COPY

Eden Daily News Area

Page 3
Eden, N. C., Tuesday, March 8, 1983

Black Children Adoption Group To Meet Thursday

The Rockingham County Friends of Black Children Council will hold a business meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at the new St. Paul Baptist Church, located at 1020 East Stadium Drive in Eden.

The major goal of the council, organized in December, is to recruit black families for children awaiting adoption. The group hopes to increase community awareness about the need for black adoptive homes and to increase public awareness, so that black families will inquire about adoptions.

In Rockingham County over the past 13 years, 45 black families have adopted — an average of 4.5 families adopting per year. The council hopes to increase this number.

Attorney Joe Webster of Madison, who assumed the council's chairmanship in December, says he feels that myths and misinformation discourage many persons from adopting children.

State adoption laws permit any person 18 years or older, with or without children, married or single, to adopt. Sometimes agencies may require applicants to be 21 years of age before applying to adopt, however.

Among applicants, income, marital status and education might cause further concerns. The only unacceptable marital status, though, is "legally separated." A separated person cannot adopt because the spouse would have to be involved, since the marriage has not been legally dissolved.

More information on the subject will be provided for the public at the council's informational meetings, which are held in various communities bi-monthly.

The emphasis for recruitment is for homes awaiting children.

Local social service agencies and local libraries have photo books available of children available for adoption throughout the state.

Anyone interested in seeing the children may contact local council members. Eden members include Mrs. Martha Scales (telephone and Nelson Hairston

R.R. Herald 1-09-83

Friends of Black Children to meet

CHAPEL HILL — The Halifax County Friends of Black Children Council will meet Jan. 10, in Weldon.

The council was established by the Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Its purpose is to work with local department of social services to find black families to adopt black children.

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church at 301 W. 3rd St., Weldon. Persons who may be interested in adopting or who already have adopted children and others interested in the welfare of black children are invited to attend.

The Halifax County council held and organizational meeting in Weldon in December. Bettie G. Cofield of Weldon was elected chairperson and Gladys Lawson of Enfield was elected vice-chairperson.

For more information, contact Cofield at or Lawson at or Sam Lane or Shirley Lawson of the Halifax Department of Social Services at 536-2511.

BEST COPY

March 10, 1983
Charlotte Post

You Can Help

Have Been Loosened

Eligibility Requirements For Adoptable Children

By Andrew McCorkle
Post Staff Writer

Because black children who are available for adoption are hard to place, eligibility requirements for persons who wish to adopt have been loosened, said Olivia Williams, Cabarrus County Department of Social Services eligibility specialist.

There are about 2,894 children available for adoption in North Carolina. Approximately 785 of the children are black and in dire need of homes, she said. Black children are much harder to place than whites.

"The Friends of Black Children," a statewide program designed to inform black people about the number of available black children and urge them to adopt, was started in Cabarrus County in December.

"Basically, the program is to let black people know that all those children need homes," Ms. Williams explained. "We want anybody who is interested, or anyone who knows someone that is interested, to call."

care is 4.4 years. "For white children, the stay is about one-third of that time," Ms. Williams said.

Ms. Williams emphasized that it's a mystery why black people are slow about adopting children.. However, adoption is shrouded in many myths and misconceptions, she said.

Many people believe that their lives will be highly scrutinized and that they may not meet tough eligibility requirements, if they wish to adopt, Ms. Williams stated.

"We're trying to get the word spread that that isn't true anymore," she explained. "You don't have to make X number of dollars or live in a mansion. Just have the capacity for the love of children."

Anyone at least 21-years-old, including senior citizens and single persons are eligible, she said. Children of all ages are available.

"It's really bad," Ms. Williams emphasized. "They're only children, all they need is someone to love them. We want the black community to know that the children are out there and available."

"The Friends of Black Children Council" is sponsored by the Department of Social Services with child care consultants from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Although black people have not traditionally been significantly active in providing homes for black children, they have been active in providing foster care, stated Ms. Williams.

Foster care is temporary. A placement can last over night or for several years.

BEST COPY

3-9-83

Seek black adoptive families

The Halifax County Friends of Black Children Council is now working with the county department of social services to recruit black adoptive families.

The council has held monthly meetings since the group organized in December. The emphasis for recruitment is for homes for the waiting children. Black families are needed for adoption of children of all ages, with a crucial need for families for school age children.

Regional statistics, which include Halifax County, indicate that as of January 1983 a total of 19 black children between the ages of birth to six years were waiting for adoptive homes, 21 black children between 7-12 years of age and 19 black children over the age of 13 were waiting for homes.

Through the efforts of the council certain members or area coordinators have received PALS books, so that people can actually see some of the children in need of adoptive homes. These photo books are available at the area social services agencies and libraries.

The PALS book is a photo listing of children across the state that are legally free to be adopted. However, of the 230 children waiting for adoptive homes, only a small percentage of the total number of children are listed at this time.

Anyone interested in seeing the children listed can contact the following persons: Sam Lane or Shirley Baugham at
Bettie Cofield at
Gladys Lawson at
Rev. John Moore at
2164, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Akridge at or Mrs. Beatrice Jones at

Concord Tribute 1-9-83

Friends of Black Children Council will meet Monday

The Cabarrus County Friends of Black Children Council, which works with local departments of social services in finding black families to adopt black children, will meet 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 17, at the Westminister Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The council was established by the Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

Persons who may be interested in adopting or have already adopted children should attend the meeting as well as others interested in the welfare of black children.

The Cabarrus Council held an organizational meeting in December when Ella Evans volunteered to serve as chairman.

For more information contact Evans at 786-2345 or Olivia Williams or Judy Greene of the Cabarrus County Department of Social Services at 786-7141.

The Friends of Black Children Demonstration Project can be reached at 919-966-2646.

Friends Of Black Children Hold Monthly Meetings

The Cabarrus County Friends of Black Children Council has held monthly meetings since the group organized in December. The group organized to assist the local department of social services in recruiting black adoptive families.

The emphasis for recruitment is for homes for the waiting children. Black families are needed for adoption of children of all ages. However, the crucial need is for families for school age children. Regional statistics which include Cabarrus County indicate that as of January, 1983: 23 black children between ages birth to six years were waiting for adoptive homes, 25 black children between seven and 12 years were waiting, and 22 black children over the age of 13 years were waiting for homes.

Through the efforts of the Council certain members or area coordinators have received PALS books, so that people can actually see some of the children waiting for adoptive homes. These photo books are also available at the local social services agencies and local libraries. The PALS books is a photo listing of children across the state who are legally free to be adopted. However, of the 230 children waiting for adoptive homes, only a small percentage of the total number of children are listed at this time.

Subscribe to the voice of the black community. Call 376-0496 today!

The Charlotte Post
March 10, 1983

BEST COPY

WSHA DECLARES ADOPT A CHILD MONTH

WSHA has declared March, Adopt A Child Month, in response to a local group's efforts to recruit Black adoptive families. The Friends of Black Children Council was formally organized in December, 1982. The goals of the Council are to inform the Black community regarding the number of Black children waiting for permanent homes and to actively recruit families.

The "Adopt A Child Month" campaign involves a series of interviews regarding adoption. The interviews have been aired weekly on Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. since March 9th. The first interview was with the Friends of Black Children Project Staff. It is through the efforts of this project that the Friends of Black Children Council of Wake County was established. The second interview was with Bill Hickok, Chairman of Wake County Friends of Black Children. The work of the Council was explained and local members of the council were identified. The third interview will be aired on Wednesday, March 23rd at 7:00 p.m. Representatives from Wake County Department of Social Services will explain adoption services. The last interview will be aired live on Wednesday, March 30th at 7:00 p.m. This interview will feature adoptive parents and adoptive children. The plan presently is to answer questions from the listening audience.

Adopt A Child.

It's As Beautiful

As Having A Baby.

For further information and to make application to adopt . .

CONTACT:

Rockingham County Department
of Social Services
102 South Scales Street
Reidsville, North Carolina 27320
342-1394

405 Bridge Street
Eden, North Carolina 27288
623-6901

106 South Second Avenue
Mayodan, North Carolina 27027
548-6023

Office Hours:
Moday - Friday
8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Adopting
A
Child

Who Are The Children?

1. Black children
2. Sibling groups
3. Handicapped children
4. Older children
5. Children with emotional problems

Who Can Adopt?

The basic requirements are emotional stability and the maturity to love and rear a child as your own. Other things that you should know are:

1. You are not required to own your own home.
2. Mothers can work.
3. Single parents can adopt.
4. You must have sufficient income to meet the needs of additional family members.
5. You can adopt even if you already have children.
6. You must be of legal age to adopt.

How To Adopt?

In order to adopt you will need to:

1. Contact agency to learn more about adoption.
2. Schedule office and home interviews with your social worker to explore what it means to be an adoptive parent.
3. Provide social, medical and financial information.
4. Give references and verifications of marriages, divorces and deaths of spouses.

What Does It Cost?

There is no fee for adoption through the Department of Social Services.

There is a legal fee involved in every adoption.

Special Adoption Fund

North Carolina has a special adoption fund created to help hard-to-place children find permanent homes. Assistance from this fund is based on the child's needs, and may cover medical, therapeutic, legal expenses and a monthly cash payment.

Interested in Welfare of Black Children?

Adopt A Child.

It's As Beautiful

As Having A Baby.

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY
SERVICE TO ALL
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For further information and to make application to adopt:

CONTACT

Rockingham County Department of Social Services
102 South Scales Street
Reidsville, North Carolina 27320
342 1394

405 Bridge Street
Eden, North Carolina 27288
623 6901

106 South Second Avenue
Mayodan, North Carolina 27027
548 6023

Rockingham County Friends of Black Children Council

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN
UNITY
CREATING NEW LINEAGES

Give yourself a smile, by giving a child your love

You too can adopt a child or be a foster parent

We have children in all shapes, sizes, and colors who need a loving home. Some only need a temporary home while others need a permanent home.

Contact your county Social Services office today!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHO are these children?

- These are children who have been removed from their own homes for various reasons and are in the custody of the county social services department. Some have been cleared for adoption while others need only temporary care until they can be returned to their natural parents
- They are of all races and ages. Some have medical problems while others have physical or mental handicaps. Others are brothers and sisters who need to be placed together

WHO can adopt a child?

- Persons over age 18 can apply to adopt
- Persons with, or without, children
- Married couples or single men and women

WHO can be foster parents?

- Persons from age 21 to 65
- Single persons or married couples
- Persons with or without children

WHERE do you get more information?

Contact your local county Department of Social Services

ADOPTION SERVICES

Wake County Department
Of Social Services

Courthouse
10th Floor

Telephone: 755-6070

209

Wake County Department
Of Social Services
P.O. Box 1247
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

EVERY CHILD NEEDS A PARENT . . . .

OR TWO

ADOPTION

210

EVERY CHILD NEEDS A PARENT OR TWO

Who are these children?

- Black Children of all ages
- White children from 7-17 years
- Black/White children of all ages
- Some have a handicap — physical, mental, or emotional

They all are beautiful. They all need love, understanding and security. They all need parents.

Older children without parents — particularly those with handicaps — have usually seen more than their share of hard times. it is hard for them to believe anyone could really want them forever.

Adoption workers understand and will help families through the rough times.

Families who have adopted older children will tell you that having a child learn to trust you is a beautiful experience.

WHO CAN ADOPT?

- The one basic requirement is the ability to accept, love and raise a child.
- Single men and women can adopt.
- Age limits are flexible.
- You don't have to be rich, but you need to be able to manage on your income.
- You can be of any religious faith or not belong to a church at all.
- Mothers can work.
- The amount of education and kind of job you have make no difference.
- You must be a resident of Wake County.

HOW CAN YOU ADOPT?

- The first step is to call the Adoption Services, Wake County Department of Social Services.
- A social worker will arrange to talk with you in the office or your home to answer any questions you have about adoption.
- If you decide to proceed you will be given application and medical forms.
- There will be several visits in your home and the office. There may also be an opportunity to join a group of other parents who are considering adoption.
- A social worker will help you through the coming months to see if adoption is for you.
- If you decide to commit yourself to adopting a child, then you will have several opportunities to meet and visit with a child before a child comes to live with you permanently.
- Your social worker will also be available to you after the child is placed to help you with problems that may arise.

Adoption Services
Wake County Department of Social Services
Post Office Box 1247
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602
755-6070

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

The Wake County Department of Social Services is charged with the responsibility of developing a permanent plan of care for every child in legal custody of the agency in foster care. Each year there are approximately 250 children in foster homes in Wake County. Many of these children are able to return to their family within a relatively short time. However, there are some children who will not be able to return to their family. These are the children for whom we are seeking adoptive families.

Our job is to locate families for these children. The greatest need for adoptive homes is for black children of all ages, white children age nine and older, and children with severe physical and/or emotional handicaps. We also need families who can take two or more children of the same family. Each year we do need a few homes for white infants and preschool aged children. However, we do have many more requests for young white children than there are children available.

We would like the opportunity to help you become aware of the particular needs of these children so that you can determine if you are a potential adoptive applicant for a child who needs a home.

The first step is to attend one of our general information meetings held in the evenings at scheduled intervals during the year. This is an informal session with the agency staff sharing information about the children available for adoption, what is involved in adopting, and any questions about adoption that the group may have. Staff members are available at these meetings to answer individual questions. After attending the general information meeting persons who desire to explore their interests further may complete an application and return it to the agency. Decisions about which families the agency will proceed with first are based on what we learn from you about the kind of child you can accept since we set priorities in processing potential families according to the children's needs.

Basic requirements for being considered for a child are that you live in Wake County; that, if married, your marriage be of at least two years duration; that you do not have an application pending with another agency; that you have an interest in the kinds of children needing adoptive homes; that you be willing to participate in the adoption evaluation. The adoption evaluation is an opportunity for you and the agency together to explore what is involved in the adoption process and your readiness for the experience of adopting a child. One phase of the evaluation process is an opportunity to attend an adoption information/support group. We hold such groups in the evenings throughout the year and the focus is primarily one of education. Such topics as child development and legal aspects of adoption are covered. In addition, foster parents and adoptive parents are asked to participate in these groups to give a more "hands-on" experience. Our agency has found that an adoption information/support group can be invaluable to prospective adoptive parents.

Thank you for your interest in adoption. We hope to see you at an information meeting.

MN:cb/ThAS1

HOW TO BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

The basic requirements are:

1. You must be between ages 21 and 65.
2. There must be adequate space and facilities for a foster child(ren). There may be no more than 7 persons under age 18 in the home and no more than 5 foster children at any one time.
3. At no cost to you, your home must pass (a) a fire and safety inspection and (b) a sanitation inspection.
4. Each person in the home must have a medical completed which can be done free of charge at the Health Department.
5. Your income must be adequate to meet your own family needs.

*6. You must enter into an Agency-Foster Parent Agreement, be available for training, permit visits from agency staff to your home, and furnish references.

The above information is submitted to the State Foster Care Division for approval. *Licenses are issued for a period of one year.

Who To Contact For Further Information

Friends of Black Children Council

Ella Evans Work
Home
Priscilla Green
Wayne Thompson Charlotte
Harrie Bost

Area Coordinators

Concord: Thomas H. Clawson
Phone
Alice White

Harrisburg: Mrs. Shirley Thompson
Charlotte

Kannapolis: James Johnson
Phone

Department of Social Services

Judy Greene
Olivia Williams

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN — UNITY — CREATING NEW LINKAGES

Children are Waiting...

You Can Help

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE

IN CABARRUS COUNTY

THE CHILDREN

Cabarrus County's need for substitute parents, be it foster care or adoption, are the same as the overall needs statewide and nationwide. Permanent adoptive homes and temporary foster care homes are needed for all ages; sibling groups; and children with emotional or physical handicaps.

We are recruiting families to parent these special needs children.

STATISTICS

Cabarrus County as of 1-1-83:

Two infant boys, one with medical problems. Three older brothers.

Region I - 33 counties in North Carolina as of 12-9-82:

Total number of children in custody - 2624

Total number of Black children in custody - 785

Average length of stay in foster care is 4.4 years for Black Children.

WHAT IS ADOPTION?

The difference between adoption and foster care is that an adoptive home provides a permanent placement for a child. The biological parents of the child(ren) have no legal rights to the child(ren).

WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

Foster care is temporary care. A placement can last for an overnight to several years. A child in foster care may maintain contact with biological family and have visits. The biological parents still have rights and should be engaged in some plan to have child(ren) returned home.

WHO CAN ADOPT?

Adoption is easier than it used to be. The basic requirement is the ability to love and raise a child as your own. Other things you should know are:

1. You must be at least 21 years old to adopt.
2. Single, married or divorced parents can adopt.
3. You must live in Cabarrus County.
4. You must have sufficient income to meet your needs and the needs of the children.
5. You may live in a rented home, own your home, live in a mobile home or apartment.
6. Mothers can work.
7. You can adopt even if you already have children.

HOW TO ADOPT

You may contact our agency or a representative of the Friends of Black Children Council. There will be informational sessions for general information.

If you are responding to our agency's specific recruitment for a child, or a child seen on "Carolina's Child", or a child listed in the PALS Book, an individual meeting will be arranged to discuss the history and needs of these children as soon as possible.

Standard procedures are as follows:

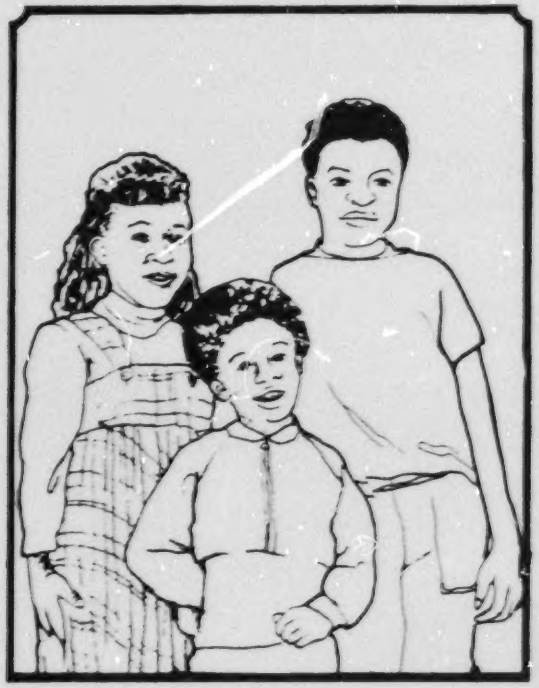
1. Contact agency or FBC Council.
2. Attend informational meeting or individual meeting.
3. Attend group training, if possible, or individual meetings.
4. Have medicals completed.
5. Fill out financial statement and application form.
6. Provide references - may include friends, pastor, or church members.

The "Friends of Black Children" Project was supported by DHHS Children's Bureau for the period of 10/1/82 to 9/30/83. It is funded by the State of North Carolina for the period of 10/1/83 to 9/30/84. The project is designed to develop effective ways for local Black community groups and local social service agency staff to cooperate to meet the adoption needs of Black children in North Carolina.

The project will seek to effectively involve Black community groups in recognizing Black children's needs and in actively planning with local agency staff to answer the identified needs. Major emphasis will be focused on enhancing the local social service agency's capacity to serve the needs of Black children awaiting adoptive families.

These activities are planned to facilitate the elimination of barriers to adoption and to increase the placement of Black children who are waiting for families.

A Black Child in Your Area Needs Your Help.



"A Child Born In The Heart Is Often Times More Endearing Than A Child Born Under the Heart"

Dorothy Jones

Through Friends of Black Children Community Councils You Can Help.

We work to find Black families to adopt Black children and teenagers who need a home. We also find Black people to recruit families who want to help these children. Essentially, we work to remove existing barriers to adoption.

Who Are These Children?

Their ages vary, from infants to teenagers. Some of them come with brothers and sisters, some are alone. Some have mental handicaps, some have physical handicaps, and some have both. Most of them are in foster homes, some are in institutions.

Although each child is unique, they all need to grow up in homes where they are wanted and where they can receive the care they deserve. They all have the right to grow up with loving parents.

Who Can Help Them?

There is no model for the ideal parent. As long as you love and want children and can provide a good home for them, we need your help. It doesn't matter whether:

- You are single, married, divorced or remarried.
- You already have children or have none.
- You finished high school or not.
- You have a high income or a low one.
- You go to church or not.
- You have a big home or a small one.
- You own or rent your home.

Your commitment to helping these children is what matters, not your background.

What You Have To Do To Adopt A Child

Talk with a social worker in your county about why you want to adopt a Black child, what you can offer the child, and what age and sex child you want. Then, wait for the right child to become available.

Waiting For Your Child

This is the most difficult part about adopting. It takes time to talk with your social worker about the child you want, and you may have to wait for the child who is right for you.

In general, older children are more readily available for adoption than younger children are. Handicapped children are more available than non-handicapped children are, and Black males are more available than Black females are. There are many brothers and sisters who need to be placed together so they can remain one family.

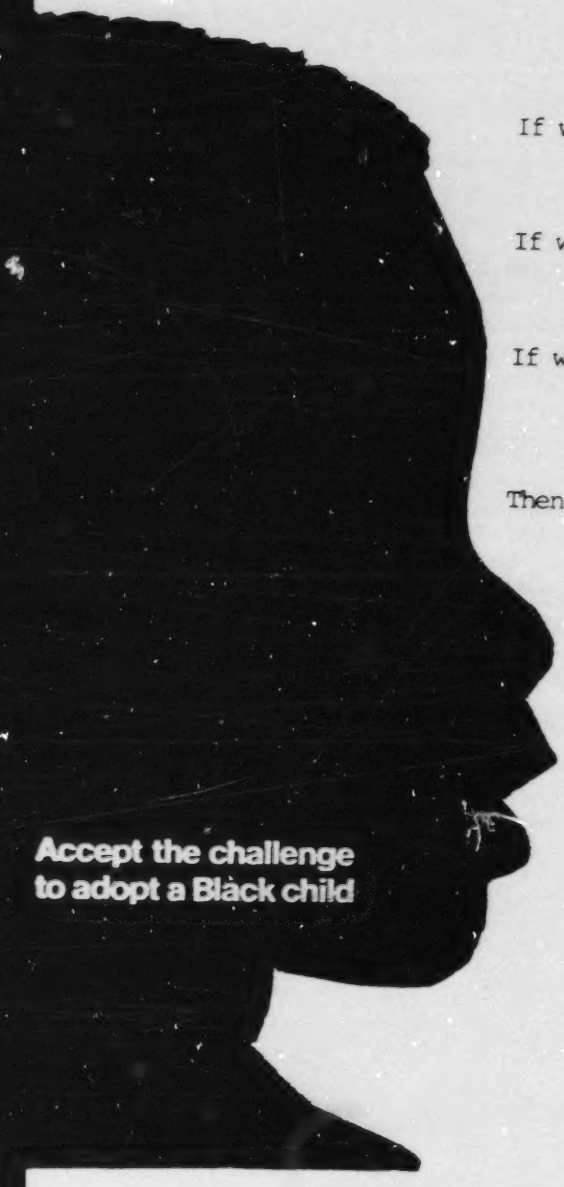
For More Information:

To find out about the children in your area, call your local Department of Social Services and ask to speak to the adoptions caseworker. You can also call the Children's Home Society, which has locations in Raleigh, Greensboro, Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greenville, Wilmington and Jacksonville. Tell them you were referred to them by the Friends of Black Children.

For information about the Friends of Black Children Community Council in your area call:

The Friends of Black Children project is under the direction of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN



If we can help somebody
who has no home,
If we can cheer somebody
saying: "You have a mom,"
If we can show somebody
who is right or wrong,

Then we can say to the Friends of Black Children,
"Our Living Shall Not Be In Vain"

FRIENDS OF BLACK CHILDREN
UNITY
CREATING NEW LINKAGES